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HARRY EGERTON ;
OR,
THE YOUNGER SON OF THE DAY.

VOL. I.

HARRY EGERTON;

OR,

THE YOUNGER SON OF THE DAY.

BY

G. L. TOTTENHAM,

AUTHOR OF "CHARLIE VILLARS AT CAMBRIDGE."

"Non equidem hoc studeo, pullatis ut mihi nugis
Pagina turgescat."

PERSIUS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

HAD not the scheme of this book been designed, and partly executed, before the singularly inartistic and youthful nature of its predecessor had been fully demonstrated to me, it would not probably be now appearing as a sequel. The connection, however, has been rendered almost immaterial. The few puppets brought on have been to some extent, I believe, developed into characters. The scene is laid in an entirely different sphere. The interest is more general, and the plot independent.

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“ It is a monstrous want of reflection that a man cannot consider that when he cannot resign the pleasures of life in his decay of appetite and inclination to them, his son must have a much uneasier task to resist the impetuosity of growing desires. . . . Narrowness in their circumstances has made many youths, to supply themselves as debauchees, commence cheats and rascals. The father who allows his son to the utmost ability avoids this latter evil, which, as to the world, is much greater than the former.”

Spectator, No. 496.

HARRY EGERTON.

CHAPTER I.

“Not a word more, sir! not a word! Your allowance was amply sufficient. You have chosen to exceed it; you may now take the consequences. How dare you calculate upon making me the victim of your extravagance? I shall not pay one sixpence for you; and, what is more, not a day longer do you continue in my house. I shall be perfectly content to forget your existence—yes, sir, to forget your existence. And now you may go.”

“Well, this is what you may call being jolly well up a tree,” soliloquised Harry Egerton, as he shut the door of his father’s study, wherein Chremes has just brought an interesting interview to a close.

Nearly a year has elapsed since we parted with Clitipho. It is early in July. The London season is drawing to a close, and a few days more would have seen him on his way to Scotland, in company with his father and their usual belongings. Every day he was expecting to be gazetted to a cavalry regiment, then quartered in Ireland; and life generally held out pleasant prospects, which were only dashed by the ever-present annoyance of debts still unpaid.

It is going on for two years since he left Cambridge; and even the most long-suffering of tradesmen have become importunate of late; so that sheer necessity has at last obliged him to screw up his courage to a full disclosure of his embarrassments.

He had chosen a time after luncheon when his father appeared to be in an unusually agreeable humour; and having followed him into his private room, had gradually unfolded the history of his difficulties, and asked for the necessary hundreds to relieve them.

Mr. Egerton had listened for some time

in blank astonishment at his son's audacity—his silence contributing very little to the prodigal's self-possession. But when at last he did recover his outraged senses, it had only been to pour forth a torrent of invective, comprising all the best-known epithets usual on such occasions, and winding up eventually with the considerate dismissal recorded on a previous page.

It was in vain for Harry to urge that since he left Cambridge he had been living economically, and paying off such bills as he could—that he had given up betting entirely, and spent almost nothing during the last year and a half—that if his debts were paid now, he should start clear, and keep so in future. The enormity of his past conduct outweighed in his father's mind every present consideration. No palliation whatever availed against the bare fact of the demand. It was futile to talk of explanation, or to draw his attention to promises of future well-doing. Injured dignity and anger had, for the time, put out the nose of reason, and under their influence Mr. Egerton

was betrayed into an extreme of harshness which would, at any other time, have jarred upon his paternal sense of affection.

The exceedingly uncomfortable nature of the prospect did not all at once come home to his son's mind, as he wandered up-stairs, and threw himself down into an arm-chair, to consider his position. He had been so long accustomed to being in want of money, that it didn't appear as if the immediate pressure was in any way increased; but, when he came gradually to realise the situation, he was obliged to confess that circumstances did not now present that indifferently pleasant aspect which they had hitherto done.

He knew his father's character too well to expect that he ever would unsay anything that had once passed his lips, however much he might subsequently regret the hasty impulse which had caused it to be said. For Mr. Egerton was the unhappy slave of a perverted obstinacy, which he called consistency, to which he sacrificed his feelings with the most ruthless zeal. His social

eccentricities were, perhaps, derived more or less from his political associations, for he was a Tory to the backbone; not one of your "truly liberal" Conservatives, but a fine old Tory, a good sound bigot, with conviction-proof ears, and beautifully obstinate in defence of any preconceived opinion or hereditary prejudice. There was plenty of natural affection in his nature; but, in deference to his principle, he considered it right on most occasions to play the part of tyrant, in preference to the paternal *rôle*, which suited him best, and which he really liked the best.

Harry knew, then, that it was useless to expect him to alter his expressed intentions; and the gaze he fixed upon the future was, with reason, a blank and hopeless one. He saw himself still continuing a prey to never-ceasing duns, without any prospect of relief from his difficulties. During the ensuing winter he should have to put up he didn't know where, instead of hunting in Leicestershire as heretofore. Would his father continue his allowance? That was

another question. He certainly would not pay for his commission now ; and he should be condemned to a continuance of the idle life of which he was already more than tired. A host of other minor, but not less disagreeable, considerations presented themselves before his dejected view, to enhance the cheering nature of the situation ; and when the door opened, and his aunt entered the room, his spirits had sunk so low that the mercury had disappeared altogether, and there was not a sign of quicksilver to be seen in the whole frame.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. GREVILLE and her daughter had now for some years filled the parts of mother and sister respectively to Mr. Egerton's establishment. He had lost his wife at the birth of his second son (the young gentleman who is now dolefully considering his position in the drawing-room); and, upon the death of her husband, Mrs. Greville had made her brother's house her home. She was almost the only one of his relations with whom he had not, at one time or another, quarrelled; and she owed her immunity to the weakness and submissiveness of her character. She never contradicted him, probably because she seldom had an opinion of her own to advance in opposition; and she stood in such evident awe of his hot temper, and showed him such deference on

all occasions, that his vanity was flattered, and her society accordingly agreeable.

It was Mrs. Greville who now broke in upon Harry's gloomy thoughts; and who, on seeing the look of dejection which his face wore, hastened to the bell, to despatch a messenger for the family physician, confident that her nephew must be in the first stage of some alarming disorder.

Harry, however, begged her to do nothing of the kind; there was nothing the matter with him; he had had a slight row with his father,—that was all.

His aunt was all anxiety and inquiry, and he continued—

“Well, I simply asked him for a few hundreds to pay off some old debts, and he got into one of his towering passions, called me every name in the dictionary, and said I shouldn't have a penny from him, and might leave his house to-night. Pleasant answer, wasn't it?” and he tried to laugh.

Mrs. Greville was aghast at the sweeping and decisive nature of the parent's reply.

“Why, where are you to go to? What

are you to do?" she exclaimed, in utter astonishment.

"*I* don't know," answered Harry, bitterly. "Turn beggar, I suppose, or something equally respectable."

Mrs. Greville clasped her hands, and sat looking at him with such a hopelessly terrified expression as Melancholy herself must have smiled to see.

"But were you so very extravagant?" she said, at last. "My dearest Henry, you must have been very extravagant." And her face assumed a semi-apologetic look for her brother.

"Well, if I was," Harry said, "I've been living economically enough lately. And it's rather hard lines when one does go in for reform, to be turned out of doors in this off-hand way. Lots of fellows owe a great deal more money than I do, and don't attempt to pay."

Mrs. Greville's face again betrayed a struggle between fear and bewilderment as she reminded him of the obstinacy of his father's nature, what a difficult man he was

to deal with, and how she should be afraid almost to speak for him. It was most unlucky, too, that this should have happened just as he was going into the army, and all (a fact which he might very well have supplied from his own knowledge); and again she clasped her hands, and performed the office of Job's comforter in a most soothing and delightful manner.

"Do you know if my mother's money is settled on me?" asked Harry, abruptly. His mother had been a sister of Mrs. Greville's husband, and married from their house in Ireland.

The money was still at Mr. Egerton's disposal, as far as Mrs. Greville knew. But, really, she could not be sure, for her brother disliked any allusion to his wife, and had never mentioned the subject to her. In fact, family matters were never discussed between them, she added, with what seemed a latent significance.

"There were no settlements?" Harry asked.

No; of that she was confident. Her poor

dear husband had been so thoroughly Irish in his carelessness about everything connected with business, that he handed over his sister's fortune without any acknowledgment whatever; at least, as far as Mrs. Greville had ever heard of. And she sighed a pitying sigh for the defectiveness of that Irish nature.

Like many other persons who are deficient in strength of character, this estimable lady had attached to herself certain prejudices, which were wont, on occasions, to do duty for opinions, and which were clung to with all the natural tenacity of unreasoning weakness. In particular, she had acquired, from her English instincts and associations, an unmeaning aversion to Ireland and the Irish. And to fully demonstrate this aversion, she had very judiciously married an Irishman—a real Irishman, too, who passed the greater part of his time amongst his own people, and required that his wife should do the same. Mrs. Greville, therefore, had plenty of opportunity of mixing with the people, and unlearning her

prejudices, if she had been so inclined. But no, she never *could* get over her dislike to those dreadful Irish. So she stayed at home, and, whenever opportunity offered, took occasion to say something to their disadvantage. This, of course, was the best of taste, to abuse her husband's countrymen in his own house and before his face, and was very much calculated to promote a considerable cordiality between them, even though his patriotism might fire up occasionally. But people did say that Mrs. Greville was not utterly inconsolable at his death, and was not altogether sorry to return to independence and England again.

"But," Harry urged, "this money might have been settled since. It was always understood—wasn't it?—that I was to have it."

"Yes, it certainly was intended," Mrs. Greville said, "that it should go to the younger children of the marriage. But—" and she sighed, and again it seemed a meaning sigh.

"But what?" asked Harry.

His allusion to his mother seemed to have

carried off his aunt's thoughts into another channel, for she was looking absently on the floor, and murmured rather to herself than in reply to his question—

“Time will show. Strange that it should have gone on so long; strange, strange! but it must end some day.”

“What must end?” asked her nephew, with greater interest than before. “You have often hinted at some family secret, aunt—what is it? Why can't you speak out plainly, instead of going on always in that mysterious way?”

Mrs. Greville had, in fact, more than once indulged in strange vaticinations of this kind, when any unusual turn in Harry's or his brother's affairs, or their father's behaviour towards them, had aroused the prophetic instinct from her inner consciousness. Harry had always treated them as a joke, and laughed at her woman's fondness for a mystery. But in the present crisis, any straw which held out the faintest hope had a natural interest for him; and accordingly, he pressed for further explanation.

“Ah!” sighed his aunt, still absent, “I feel so confident—so confident that I could not be mistaken. I wish I could think it otherwise; I do, indeed. And yet——” and again she sighed a short, uncertain sigh.

Harry now leaned forward, and asked, rather impatiently, what *was* the use of sighing like that? Why couldn’t she say at once what it was all about?

Mrs. Greville hereupon recovered herself. What had she been saying? How foolish of her to talk of it! “Your father, Henry dear, would be *so* angry if he knew that I had mentioned the subject to you at all. You won’t tell him—promise me that?” and she looked imploringly at him as she spoke.

“I should be very glad to know what you’re driving at, aunt,” he replied, still more impatiently. “I’m not aware that I’ve heard anything to repeat. I didn’t know that you had told me anything, so I don’t see very well how I’m to tell my father of it,—even if he ever speaks to me

again," added her nephew, as he threw himself back into his chair.

Mrs. Greville began to cry. Indeed, indeed, if she only dared she would tell him all about it. But it wouldn't make him any the happier. She was sure that it was better as it was.

"Then why go on in this absurd way," Harry asked—"exciting one's curiosity to no purpose?"

"Don't be angry with me, Henry," cried his aunt between her sobs and periodical applications of the handkerchief to her eyes. "I am not to blame,—indeed I am not; and you don't know how sorry I am for you, and how I wish I could help you." Sob, sob, sob.

This was irritating to a degree, and didn't at all suit the present condition of Harry's feelings. After a few half-angry, half-soothing words, he got up and left the room, snatched up his hat and stick, and went out into the streets in a very agreeable frame of mind.

The irritation which his aunt's language

had produced, occupied his thoughts for some time, and then his immediate difficulties pressed themselves into the front again, and engrossed his whole attention, as he wandered moodily on in the direction of the Park.

As usual at this time of the afternoon, the place was thronged with gay costumes, mean turn-outs, and *blasés* spectators.

What possible amusement, Harry cynically wondered, as he leant against the railings near Albert Gate, gazing listlessly at the occupants of the carriages, and taking off his hat mechanically to passing acquaintances—what possible amusement can they find in creeping along at that snail's pace, to be inspected by that line of chairs and gapers?

No answer was forthcoming, and, sick of the weary stream of carriages, he crossed the road, and sauntered on up the side of Rotten Row—on into the cool shade of the trees, and the green seclusion of Kensington Gardens.

The tall limes and branching elms were

casting their giant shadows across the smooth sward, and dipping them in the glittering water. Bright-plumaged water-fowl were chasing each other across the rippling surface. There was a blaze of flowers on his left, smooth slopes of green in front, a bright blue sky overhead, and children's merry voices mingling with the freshness of the air. All seemed cheerfulness, and life, and joy, to every one but him.

This brightness and life around, however, only acted as an irritant to his present thoughts; and he threw himself down upon a chair, and gave himself up to the full enjoyment of his despondency and wretchedness. All sorts of schemes presented themselves, only to be rejected. Without money, there was absolutely nothing to be done, it seemed. Then Mrs. Greville's hints about some doubt whether he was entitled to his mother's fortune, came before his mind again, to provoke a further feeling of impatience. How did he know but what it might be something of importance to him which she was conceal-

ing? Conjecture was useless. And he began to wonder whether his father would give him any allowance. Would he perhaps think better of it? No. Harry knew him too well, he thought, for that. And so his thoughts wandered on from one thing to another, until at last they all merged into a general undefined depression, which was perhaps worse than all.

In this condition he sat on till long past seven o'clock, getting up at last a little less cheerful, if possible, than when he had sat down.

CHAPTER III.

FINDING, on inquiry, that his father had gone out to dinner, Harry went up-stairs to the drawing-room, and found Maud Greville there alone with her thoughts.

"I *am* so sorry about you, Harry," she exclaimed, as he entered. "I think it's too cruel of Uncle Philip." And Maud went up to him, as he leant against the chimney-piece, and looked up into his face so kindly and so naturally, that Harry was moved for a moment out of his melancholy fit, and, putting his arm round her neck, answered—

"It *is* rather hard lines, Maud. It's almost enough to make one do something reckless."

"Please don't say that, Harry dear," she said. "Think how miserable we should all be!" Then, laying her hand affectionately

on his shoulder, Maud went on—"Surely something can be done about these horrid debts. Wouldn't Philip lend you some money? He always seems to have as much as he wants. And I'm sure *he* isn't extravagant."

"Philip!" Harry exclaimed, bitterly. "He'd see me a long way before *he*'d ever help me. That excellent brother of mine has much too great a regard for his money and himself, Maud."

"Oh! I'm sure he would," cried simple little Maud, "if he only knew how sorry you were."

Harry smiled kindly at her eager simplicity, and she continued, rather bashfully—

"And you know, Harry, I have some money too. I would willingly give it you—all of it—if you'd only take it."

"Just like you, Maud dear; but I couldn't think of it," replied Harry, drawing her towards him and kissing her. They had been brought up together ever since he was "a tiny little boy;" and Maud, who was a simple, natural, Irish girl, full of warmth

and free from affectation of any kind, loved Harry as if he had been her brother, and it had never entered her thoughts to look upon him in any other light.

Mrs. Greville entered the room, dressed for dinner. "My child, are you still here? —not dressed yet?"

"Oh, mamma, I wanted to see Harry before he goes away," exclaimed her child, with tears in her eyes; "and Uncle Philip is dining out, so he can't be angry. I should have been very rude to him, I'm sure, if he had dined at home this evening."

"I should, mamma, I know I should," was the only answer which her mother's mild rebuke provoked.

And then they fell to talking upon Harry's immediate prospects, and why he hadn't told them he was in debt, that this catastrophe might have been averted.

The fact was, Harry said, that he was afraid of Philip getting hold of it. He knew there would have to be a row some time, and he didn't want it precipitated through Philip's means. "He abuses me

enough as it is," he said, "for being a younger son, and extravagant, and all the rest of it; and it would very soon have got to my father through him."

"Ah! you were always so different," murmured his aunt, absently.

Again that mysterious language. In heaven's name, what meant it?—Nothing, which Mrs. Greville could explain. But she went on to suggest that as his Aunt Eleanor professed to be so fond of him, why didn't he go and live with her?

"I'm sure she has room enough for you," Mrs. Greville continued, in a slightly contemptuous tone. Although Lady Belvedere was her sister, she always spoke of her in a purposely indifferent and disparaging manner, because Lady Belvedere, having a considerable power of self-assertion, had long ago quarrelled with Mr. Egerton, and would persist in treating Mrs. Greville with a most annoying sympathy—partly, as she allowed her to see, from pity for the weakness of her character, and partly because she lived with her brother, with whom Lady

Belvedere had had the superior sense to quarrel. But it was true that she had a great affection for Harry; and it was supposed that he might some day be her heir. For she was a widow of property, without children—her only son, who was born just about the same time as Harry, having died soon after his birth. So that there was a little romantic sentiment, perhaps, forming an element in her affection for her nephew.

That nephew, however, did not see why she should be expected to acquiesce in the arrangements which were being made for her, and Maud exclaimed—

“But what *will* you do then, Harry?” evidently under the impression that when expelled from his father’s house he would be obliged to sleep in the streets.

Harry had no doubt that he should be able to find a bed-room somewhere in the neighbourhood of his club until the end of the season, when he should probably go to Homburg or Baden, or somewhere, and try and make some money at the gambling tables.

Death by pistol eventually, in some dark

and shady walk in the neighbourhood of the Kursaal, was Mrs. Greville's notion of gambling, and in deference to the apprehension which her face expressed, Harry withdrew the suggestion; but must take to the turf, he said, if he was not to gamble.

Even this, however, did not satisfy his aunt, whose experience of the turf in Mr. Egerton's young days was not a source of pleasant recollection.

"Why not come with us to Castle Greville, Harry?" here suggested Maud, who, unlike her mother, was never so happy as when wandering about her brother's place in Galway. Mrs. Greville, indeed, had never visited Ireland since her husband's death; and only that Maud was bent on a visit this autumn, and would not on this occasion be able to avail herself of her brother's escort, she would not be going there now. But Maud had insisted, and her mother had been obliged to acquiesce.

"You know you have often promised to go," she continued; "and Spencer, I know, would be delighted to see you."

“And you could take care of us over that odious sea,” added her mother.

“Oh! come, mamma, the sea isn’t nearly so bad as you always make it out,” cried Maud. “But you will go, Harry, won’t you?”

Harry mused. He couldn’t well go to Scotland. The chances were that he met his father somewhere, and this would be awkward. If he went abroad—true, he might break the bank at some of these places; but then there was the possibility of the bank breaking him, and then he should be more “up a tree” than ever. If he went to Ireland he should be well out of the way of duns for some time, at all events—he needn’t leave any address; and several people had asked him to stay whenever he came over there. Greville had fishing, too, and shooting,—poor, perhaps, after Scotland; but beggars must not be choosers.

But then, again, he had had an offer of a berth in a yacht from Tom Manners, an old Cambridge ally. Although he had declined this at the time, thinking that he

was going to Scotland with his father to fish, it might not be too late to take it now, and then to Ireland for the shooting, which didn't begin there till the 20th.

Yes, the time might be spent agreeably enough in that way.

"When are you going?" he asked at length, as he disclosed his embryo plan, having entirely forgotten that they might perhaps be counting upon his escort over Mrs. Greville's odious sea.

"Then you won't go and gamble," said Maud, who only thought of his comfort, forgetting on her part that they would probably have left Castle Greville to join Mr. Egerton in Scotland before Harry arrived at her brother's place.

Harry said he must think it over.

"And now, Maud, go and dress, my child," said her mother.

She supposed that Harry would also dine there, as he was not dressed; and, as his father was not at home, Harry supposed so too.

After dinner, having given directions for

the removal of his property, he strolled down to the St. James's Club in search of Manners, who was now a gentleman at large, scattering money about the town in great profusion, and full as ever of spirits and good-nature. To his sympathising ear Harry now had it in his mind to confide the crisis which had just taken place in his affairs.

CHAPTER IV.

MANNERS was not in the club—probably dining out; elder sons generally do dine out—so Egerton took up the evening paper to while away an hour or so, either until he returned, or until it was late enough to look in at some ball, where in the excitement of a crowd, or in the sweet enjoyment of forbidden fruit, his thoughts might assume a livelier tone.

Running his eye listlessly down the columns of the paper, his attention was arrested by an announcement copied from the *Morning Post* of that day, to the effect that two distinguished members of the aristocracy and Mr. Charles Villars had been last heard of in the Himalayah Mountains, where, said the *Morning Post*, it was exceedingly gratifying to hear that the noble

lords (Villars had either been promoted from association, or neglected as a mere commoner) had been enjoying excellent sport. Truly gratifying indeed! Every reader of that interesting intelligence must have felt a thrill of sympathetic pleasure as he read, which would have done honour to the editor of the *Court Journal*. For it is not at all necessary that we should have any acquaintance with the young aristocracy who enjoy excellent sport in the Himalayah Mountains in order to sympathise with their successes. We take such a natural interest in, feel such an instinctive attachment for, anything noble, that their joys and sorrows are common property, and stir our feelings as though they were our own. It must be truly a very fine instinct in the English nature which, in spite of moral prejudices, prompts us to "deeply regret" the death of our noble spendthrifts, whose example has so materially benefited their age, and makes us "rejoice to learn" that the amiable and accomplished daughter of some scheming dowager has entered into a matrimonial

alliance with the wealthy Lord Haymarket, whose debaucheries have been for so many years the talk of the town. It is something to have the capacity to admire what is great and noble, and those excellent papers, therefore, must be deserving of all praise for assisting to develop this fine instinct.

Egerton certainly was gratified at seeing the paragraph above quoted; for his somewhat romantic attachment to his friend had not suffered any diminution through absence; although since they parted circumstances had arisen which might have been supposed to have that effect, for he was now in love,—deeply, inextricably in love with Blanche Villars. And love is usually so exacting that it withdraws a large portion of that warmth which went to maintain any previously ardent friendship. Men of strong affections must find a depository for their sentiment somewhere; and, therefore, until it is directed into its natural channel (until they fall in love), it is all expended on the one bosom friend. But since it is not possible to love two objects with equal

ardour at the same time, when love's star rises, friendship's inevitably wanes.

But though the demands which love now made upon Harry's stock of sentiment may have been prejudicial to the maintenance of the same romantic feelings of friendship, another influence had lately replaced in his affection whatever it may have lost in the way of sentiment. This was sympathy for the distress which presumably his friend had suffered from being thrown over by the girl to whom he had been engaged a year before.

As Blanche Villars lived almost as much in her brother's life as in her own, it may be imagined with what indignation she read a letter from Rome one morning announcing that her brother's *fiancée* had been privately married there to another man.

Lady Mary Villars even doubted for a moment whether that impersonation of scorn and anger which had just entered her bedroom could be her own daughter.

"Why, my darling Blanche," she exclaimed, "what is the matter?"

And Blanche handed her the letter without a word. Her indignation, in fact, had deprived her for the moment of the power of speech.

“Well, mamma, what do you think of my letter?” she asked in a trembling voice, when her mother had finished reading.

“My poor boy!” was all the mother said, as her eyes filled with tears at the thought of the anguish, and rage, and jealousy which he was possibly then enduring.

“Poor Charlie, indeed!” echoed Blanche. But even her sympathy and sorrow for him were for the time obscured by the scorn and contempt which she felt for the girl who had been the cause of it, and who had once been her friend.

“I declare,” she cried, “it almost makes me ashamed of my sex to think that any woman could do anything so mean, so detestable, so wicked. People used to say that she was a flirt, but I never listened to them; I used to stand up for her. But now——” Blanche continued, and broke into an expressive silence. Neither spoke for a few

moments, and Lady Mary was debating in her own mind whether she ought to be more sorry for her boy's disappointment, or glad at his escape from a marriage which she had never approved of.

"Charlie never liked this Mr. Murray, I think," she said presently.

"No, he didn't," Blanche replied; "but they were always by way of being friends, and Mr. Murray used always to pretend to be very fond of him. And then to behave in this mean and treacherous way behind his back. Oh, mamma, I can't tell you what a contempt I feel for that man and his wife!" And there certainly was a fine scorn in her face, as with indignation flashing through her tears, she continued—"No, I would sooner be a woman after all—women may be excused for being weak and changeable. But to be a man, and to act as Mr. Murray has done—I wouldn't have anything in common with a thing so base!"

Of course Blanche had heard of such base deeds being done before in the higher circles of English society. But coming home so

directly to herself and her feelings, it naturally seemed as if the present case far eclipsed in enormity any previous instances of a like nature which had come under her notice—*hinc illæ lacrymæ.*

The question next arose how the news was to be broken to the unfortunate young man, who might or might not have had recent access to European intelligence, and Blanche eventually undertook the pleasing task.

But long before her letter, with the news carefully softened down, reached her brother in the East, he had had the good luck to meet with Grey, an old Cambridge friend and neighbour, at Alexandria, whither he had arrived in other company from Rome, on his way up the Nile.

From him Villars had heard of the death-blow for the present of his matrimonial hopes; and it was almost satisfactory that the suspense caused by intermitted correspondence and cooling ardour of expression should be thus finally ended. Wrapping himself, therefore, in his misery, he had gone

farther away from home, and picked up in India the friends in whose company it was so gratifying to hear that he was enjoying excellent sport.

All this marrying, and throwing over, and indignation, and letter-writing had taken place some months before, towards the end of the winter; and the subject had provided much interesting conversation for the London world before Easter. A month after and the whole affair was forgotten. Murray and his wife had the decency to stay abroad during the summer, and the friend and sister were almost the only people who gave another thought to the unhappy wretch who was bemoaning his luckless fate in the East.

To these two, however, the subject had by no means lost its interest, and they found it so pleasant to have a common sympathy with the victim, and a common indignation against the twin cause of his misery, that they saw a great deal of each other in consequence, and talked a great deal on this, and, indeed, on other subjects.

But though Egerton might be very indignant at the wrong done to his friend, and though Blanche's purity and innocence and sense of honour were outraged to such an extent, yet the rest of the world, mind you, would think it rather a good joke—would be rather obliged to this young couple,—a good many of them,—for giving them something to talk about for a few days. A good many more would say that all was fair in love or war, that she was a devilish fine girl, and that Murray was right enough to get her if he could—played his cards well, in fact—did the trick very neatly. Delightful world ! Principle and honour, and openness and candour, and all that kind of thing, are very well in their way, but not of much account after all, are they ? What if Murray did play the reptile in Machiavelli's country ? On his return to London and London's punctilious society, he will very properly be looked upon as an object of interest, a little nine-days' hero perhaps, because he has outraged the unwritten laws of honour, which are revered by a paltry

few among this virtuously-educated multitude. He may have done a friend a grievous wrong—stabbed him like a murderer to gratify his own selfish passion—well, what of it? Every one for himself, surely, is a good principle in this world. What does it matter how mean, or ungentlemanlike, or dishonourable, any action may be, as long as the success of it contributes to our own gratification? Respect for our neighbour's feelings, the recognised duties of friendship, generosity, honour, and such-like petty qualities, we leave to such unenlightened creatures as they may concern. We are men of the world, we are, and therefore superior to such trifles. Our motto is success, at the sacrifice of any principle, let it be in politics, or society, or literature, or in any other walk you please.

But though the world might be very ready to hold out its arms and receive them with becoming interest, this delightful pair had not yet returned to receive the congratulations of their friends.

Mrs. Charlemont, however, did turn up,

and told Lady Mary Villars that really she was quite ashamed to meet her. What would her poor boy think of Emily? But she *was* so wilful, there was no restraining her. Dear, dear! the tears which she had wept, and the agony of grief which she had gone through about this unfortunate marriage—she really wondered that she had survived it.

But, on the whole, it was not matter for very great surprise. Mrs. Charlemont in her own heart was not at all so very sorry that her daughter should have managed to secure a man who was actually in possession of a large property, instead of waiting till Mr. Villars thought fit to hand on his shoes to his son. The only thing which did occasion her some slight concern was, that her daughter should have laid herself open to remark for having married in what some silly people would consider rather an unusual way; and therefore, notwithstanding her protestations of sympathy with Lady Mary's son, and sorrow that her daughter should have behaved as she had done, Mrs.

Charlemont was, under the circumstances, looking remarkably well for her age.

It is only fair, though, to this most excellent old lady to say that she had no direct hand in bringing about the marriage. Her daughter had managed it all for herself with the most admirable skill. She was a young person whose love was of the nature of that detestable compound which the novels of the day try so hard to render attractive—a mixture of vanity and passion. And as long as the former could be satisfied by present admiration, the fire of the latter might be kept up well enough; but when absence diminished the required fuel, it burned lower and lower, and would have soon gone out altogether if the dying embers had not been fanned into flame again by a breeze from another quarter.

Love of this kind is surely worthy to have two or three volumes devoted to its analysis. It must be such a gratifying employment to prove elaborately that

“Nature with a beauteous wall
Doth oft close in pollution.”

And what a dignified task for a woman to set herself! What a noble object for her energy or talent, to corrupt the purity of her sex, and to qualify her readers, as far as she is able, for followers in Circe's hideous train! The promotion of vice is well known to be a lucrative profession. But it is not unlikely that the female writers who flood the town with their nasty fictions would be surprised to find themselves mentioned in company with their sisters in another branch of the trade, who are not recognised in polite society. They affect a higher walk of corruption, perhaps, but their energies are given to the same cause, and produce the same results, so that the affectation of superiority is only mean.

It is pleasant to turn from such a disagreeable subject to the very different kind of love which Blanche felt for Harry Egerton. Attracted to him first through his friendship for her brother, she had soon grown to like him for himself; and from this little bud of mutual liking, there soon had bloomed a beautiful and tender flower

of love, which was none the less beautiful that it was born to blush unseen. What was the enamoured swain, who was a younger son at the same time, to do? He had nothing to marry upon. How then propose it? Was he to confess his folly in having allowed himself to drift into an unalterable attachment, and trust in Providence to make some provision for the consummation of it? He thought not; and therefore he used sometimes to determine that he would avoid meeting her, for fear his self-restraint should not be equal to his need. And, in order to carry out this wise resolve, he would turn up an hour or two after at some ball, or breakfast, or entertainment of some kind, where he knew she would be, and would nervously follow all her movements the whole time he was talking to somebody else. He found this, of course, a very refreshing exercise for his feelings, and would repeat it, *da capo*, from the beginning, on the very next opportunity, and would be found standing by her side in a quadrille half an hour after he had declared

to himself that this sort of delicious misery must positively come to an end.

And Blanche? Ah! Blanche, like Viola, loved on, and never told her love—not even to her mother. But a gentle cloud of melancholy settled upon her life, which it grieved that mother's heart to see. She knew very well what that pale cheek meant, that absent, dreaming look, that restless wandering of the eye when the one longed-for face was sought amongst the crowd. And Harry's tenderness of manner had naturally not escaped the instinct of the chaperone which must exist even in the best of mothers, and which, more or less, must always resent being aroused by the attentions of a younger son.

Lady Mary was concerned, of course, for her daughter's happiness, and the present state of her affections seemed very unlikely to promote that end. But as Blanche had not yet admitted her to her confidence, her prudent advice was deferred until such period as it might be warranted; and for the present she was enjoying all the appre-

hension which doubtless good mothers frequently experience from those nuisances of matrimonial society—ardent but impecunious brothers to elder sons of property.

CHAPTER V.

MANNERS did not arrive, and Egerton having exhausted his thoughts, and tried without success to read several papers, gets up at last, gives a final brush to his hair, satisfies himself with his appearance in the glass, and sallies forth to his ball.

Now, as Harry's was a naturally cheerful and buoyant disposition, and as he had had a fit of depression this afternoon long enough to last him quite until the next occasion of the kind should arise, it was not unnatural that when he got amongst a crowd of friends again, and came under the influence of Messrs. Coote and Tinney's well-known strains,—it was not unnatural that his disagreeable thoughts should rise to the surface, and gradually evaporate under the counter-acting influences around. At any rate, natural or unnatural, a reaction did take place, and

when he found himself in the middle of a knot of gay-spirited acquaintances at the foot of the stairs, nature refreshed from her bath of gloom, broke out into unusual gaiety and light. To see his face as he entered the room, fresh from some sparkling repartee perhaps (they are of such common occurrence), you might have fancied that he had just come in for a fortune, instead of having only this afternoon received his *congé* from the paternal roof. A cheerful disposition is, after all, about as great a blessing as mortal man can inherit.

Having satisfied himself that she had not yet arrived, Harry set to work to dance with a vigour which only younger sons on their promotion are capable of, and which even they, amid the plurality of revolving and impinging bodies, find it difficult at times to keep up. When people go into raptures about the mazy dance, the light fantastic toe, &c., one can't help thinking of the uncommonly heavy heel one makes acquaintance with occasionally; the delights of intertangled tulle and tarletan, the cracking of trimming,

and bumping of falling heads, and jerky attempts at progress, and swaying masses of struggling perspiration, and crunching of beads under foot, and irritation against that persistent bruiser, and then the final retirement into the tea-room in despair—a cynical view of a ball-room, perhaps.

This, however, was not the light in which Egerton was enjoying his newly-found spirits, and he continued to rattle glib nonsense to successive partners, until he espied on a sudden that form upon the stairs.

Depositing his partner with almost indecent haste,—the dance being just over,—he launched himself through the doorway, and after some struggling found himself at Blanche's side.

The next dance was his; and he led her away in triumph from other would-be partners, who had hurried up to be remembered later on. A few were gratified, and Blanche, laughingly pleading the impossibility of making further engagements at present, entered the room on Harry's arm, and swept past his late partner.

“ Ah ! so that was the reason Mr. Egerton was in such a hurry to get away,” said Miss Florence L'Estrange, partly to herself, and partly to her sister, who was standing by her, keeping guard over Lady Emily, their mother.

Miss Florence thought the human face divine very simple reading, as she watched the two crossing the room, and saw Blanche look up with an expression which there was no mistaking, in reply to some animated commonplace of Harry's. Women, I suppose, are always on the look-out for something of the kind, for they generally are able to detect meanings in casual glances which the ordinary observer would never dream of.

“ Is he going to marry her ? ” asked the elder sister.

“ I suppose she will,” said the other. “ He's very nice, and very good-looking, don't you think ? ”

The elder sister's assent was rather a qualified one. “ Do you think she is so very pretty ? I don't.”

“ Oh ! don't you ? ” exclaimed Florence,

who was a great friend of Blanche's. "I think she's perfectly lovely."

"He hasn't any money," continued the other;—"his allowance, I suppose. She'd be a great fool to marry on that."

Florence didn't answer. She admired Harry herself a little, and being rather more romantically inclined than her sister, didn't think that the question of money ought to interfere.

"She seems very fond of him," said Florence, presently. "Look at them now." And the two smiled; the younger, sympathetic, the other sour and envious, perhaps.

You may be sure the more than intimacy which was seen to exist between Blanche and Harry Egerton had attracted the kind attention of the rest of ball-going society. Blanche being one of the best-looking girls in London, would naturally have a stronger light of criticism turned upon her, and speculation was rife as to whether the event would ever come off. The Florence L'Estranges were all for an engagement; the Miss L'Estranges, head in air, ready with much

pity and contempt for her if she did anything so imprudent and foolish.

"He used to be a great friend of her brother's," Florence continued presently, still watching their distant movements. "*He's* very good-looking too."

"He's very conceited," returned the other; adding that it was quite absurd to see Harry and Villars together, they were like a pair of girls, never apart hardly. "I wonder how the one twin gets on without the other," she said. "I see he's in India with Lord Dash and Lord Asterisk, calming his feelings, I suppose, after his disappointment;" and Miss L'Estrange laughed a pleasant laugh.

Young ladies, you see, on the look-out for ball announcements, do read their *Morning Post* religiously, and derive, we may hope, all the gratification which that excellent journal calculates upon producing.

The next dance has commenced, and Florence's partner has not yet come to claim her. Another aspirant has just been sent away; and her sister, not having been

asked in her stead, says, "What fun it is watching people dancing! I declare I like it better than dancing myself."

This was perhaps fortunate, for since this young lady (young still, though some years past her teens) was neither beautiful nor agreeable, she had ample opportunity afforded her of enjoying the particular amusement which she found such a pleasant substitute for personal dancing. Some people even went so far as to say that the fatigue of much standing, and the ineffectual desire to obtain that which professedly she was so willing to forego, occasioned her remarks to be less pleasant to her friends than they were agreeable to herself. Other girls had been even known to say that they hated her; that she was so ill-natured, she picked everybody to pieces so. Surely they must have been wrong. Lady Emily L'Estrange's daughter never could be given to making ill-natured remarks upon her friends. It was with the most kindly and Christian-like feeling that she turned round to her mother, when her sister went away to dance, and

drew her attention to "that lamp-post of a girl dancing over there. Goodness! how can she make such a guy of herself?"

And it was with an equal kindliness and sympathy for the poor creature's awkward appearance that Lady Emily, after glancing over at her, discharged herself of that graceful word, "Fright!"

It was the same genial interest, too, in her neighbours which prompted Miss L'Estrange to animadvert upon the trimming of that body, the poker-like dancing of that partner of her sister's, the shameful way in which that girl—her friend—danced with her head upon her partner's shoulder, the gawky appearance of some other friend, the way in which another was making up to some young moneyed marquis, &c., &c.; and it was of course only that very natural dislike to being squeezed, which is peculiar to the sex, which prompted her to say that *she* should be very sorry to dance in that crowd.

So pleasant, indeed, and piquant were Miss L'Estrange's comments upon the dancers,

that I'm not sure but what she might have been allowed absolute freedom from the interruption of actual dancing—full time and liberty for the indulgence of her pleasant vein, had it not been that Lady Emily L'Estrange's balls were only open to those younger sons who danced with her daughters. And therefore Miss L'Estrange was obliged at times to vary the entertainment which, during the greater part of the evening, she was enabled to provide for herself and her mother.

Now you would hardly believe it, perhaps, that notwithstanding the many excellencies of Lady Emily's character, which happily were being reproduced in her eldest daughter, Lady Emily herself was not a popular woman. It is not easy to account for this, for she had all that well-bred indifference for the feelings of her neighbours which long familiarity with London life is apt to engender. She was even brusque—nay, sometimes deliberately rude. She perfectly understood the manner in which younger sons expected to be treated. Her

freezing recognition was perfect in its courtesy. And who better than Lady Emily knew how to practise the graceful arts of fascination which should win over dull elder sons for her charming daughters? And yet, notwithstanding that these manifold attractions of manner had not gained for her the popularity which they so eminently deserved, people were nevertheless most anxious to attend her balls, which ranked high among the entertainments of the season. Perhaps it was that they were anxious of experiencing personally—as by good luck it might so chance—a little of the high-bred arrogance and refined contemptuousness of manner which had seemingly been played off to so little purpose upon the world in general. Lady Emily's charming versatility of manner, too, might be to many an attractive study. To see her in conversation with a duchess, or any other lady of superior rank or fashion, you would hardly have thought she was the same person, so perfectly could she adapt her manner to the occasion. That smooth flow

of seductive flattery which glided so pleasantly from her lips must have been a treat to listen to. Her attentions to her *dear* duchess, or her *dear* Lady So-and-so, some ill-natured people would even say were overdone. But what won't ill-natured people say? They even found fault with the sweet, interested expression which her face, fresh from insulting Mrs. Smith (so they said), would assume, when she forgot her other guests entirely in anxiety for the comfort of her dear friend with the strawberry leaves. Surely so accomplished a manner, grafted upon the sweet, frank nature which with such charming candour confessed its dislike of some people to their faces, and declared its admiration so naïvely of its superiors—surely such qualities should have been popular. Yet I do assure you Lady Emily was *not* habitually spoken of in terms of very high praise; and I really believe that when Harry Egerton asked her daughter to dance, and when Lady Emily asserted that she was engaged, until contradicted by Florence herself—I believe

Harry even thought that the dear old lady had done something rude. Silly boy ! How could he expect to be as well up in London manners as an old *habituée* like Lady Emily?

But we must tear ourselves from such pleasant company, and follow the persons who more particularly claim our attention. They had long ago retired from the dancing-room to a deserted one far off, which for the present they had all to themselves. There is at all events one advantage resulting from everybody crowding into the dancing-room at a ball, which is, that they leave in the other rooms a solitude peculiarly adapted to the low-toned conversations in which refugees from the crowd delight to indulge. What good-natured person, then, would wish this good old gregarious custom to cease?

The room where Harry and his partner had seated themselves was a fairy-like retreat, and no mistake. Brilliant exotics and drooping ferns stood in the corners and fire-places. The cool air floated in through the open window over a bank of sweet-scented flowers. Shaded lamps filled the

room with a soft, subdued light, and fitful gusts of music swept down the corridor at intervals, and stole softly in upon the perfumed air. Every sense formed some delight. And the thoughtful mistress of the ball had doubtless fitted up this room for the especial reception of such visitors as now occupied the soft cushions of that sofa so judiciously placed in that half-screened recess.

With a half-conscious blush—yes, she actually still retained that now unfeminine habit—Blanche seated herself, and listened to and joined in the soft nonsense which people usually talk in similar circumstances. Meaningless nothings helped out by some tenderness of look or expression, or gentleness of tone; confidential banter; playful insinuation; arched eyebrows, and innocent twaddle; the whole pervaded with a general sense of the enjoyment of the situation—this is the stuff of which these whispered *tête-à-têtes* are usually composed. And most delightful they are!

After a few moments of this kind of

thing, rather more highly spiced, perhaps, by an extra infusion of tenderness, Harry asked his companion suddenly whether she thought she could guess what had happened to him that afternoon.

This was distinctly a happy thought of his, for in the solving of the riddle, opportunity was afforded for many pleasant passages, none the less pleasant for their simplicity. What could he mean? and their eyes met very frequently over the impossible guesses which Blanche made, which of course were nowhere near the mark.

“Do tell me,” she said at last—“I can’t think of anything else.”

And then Harry, sure of much sympathy, related the scene he had had with his father, the hours of despondency he had only just emerged from, and the somewhat blank nature of his future prospects.

“Now don’t you think it’s rather hard?” he went on; “for you know I’m not a very extravagant fellow at all, and what I’m to do now I haven’t an idea.”

“Oh! it’s more than hard,” Blanche

exclaimed; "he can't mean what you say." And the tremendous nature of the situation seemed almost too much to take in all at once. "One reads of such things," she said, "in novels; but I never heard of any one doing anything like that in real life."

Blank astonishment gradually gave place in her face to a more tender and sympathetic interest, and she continued earnestly, "Why don't you write to him? You can say things so much better in a letter."

"No use, I'm afraid," Harry rejoined, looking thoughtfully at his boot; "he always means what he says, and sticks to it, worse luck. What should you do if you were me?" and he looked up into her face, and found such a loving pity in it, that he was quite glad that he had taken her into his confidence.

Blanche could suggest nothing at the moment, but she was quite sure that if Charlie had got into debt "papa would never have told him to leave the house. He would have been angry, perhaps, but then I'm sure he would have paid them for

him. Doesn't everybody get into debt a little?"

It was very soothing and pleasant to have a lovely creature making excuses for one's faults; and Harry looked at her with a kind of grateful tenderness, as he answered that it *was* a bad habit which most young fellows were addicted to. "You'll see," he continued, after a moment's silence on both sides, "that I shall have to set up in some lucrative profession like shoe-blackening before long. I think I should do it rather well—a little red coat and apron, you know, Miss Villars—rather becoming. Lots of my friends would come and have their boots cleaned, and I might make a really good thing out of it—rise to the top of my profession, and become a regular swell—have a bottle of blacking for my crest, and 'Never say die,' for my motto. What do you think?"

She laughed an absent laugh, thought it would be a long time before he made a fortune at that trade, and didn't seem much to fancy him in a little coat and apron.

“ Well, if that didn’t pay, you know, I could take to something else. There’s a charming variety, now, about a barrel-organ, and it’s a locomotive kind of life that would just suit me. I’d come and play under your windows. You should have my very best tunes, you should indeed.”

“ What nonsense you are talking !” said Blanche, with an assumed gaiety. “ Perhaps I should send and tell you to move on. You don’t know how I dislike organ-men.”

“ Then you’d dislike me. Then I won’t be an organ-grinder. But, seriously, if I found the shoe business didn’t pay, and all other trades failed, and I had to take to begging, you wouldn’t cut me if I met you in the street, would you? You’d give me a copper?”

There was a quaint pathos about the request which almost caused a tear to start into her eye; but she checked the emotion on its way, and tried to rally Harry from the grotesque melancholy into which he seemed to be lapsing.

But he went on as though he had hardly

heard what she had said, and, pursuing his own train of thought, asserted that, if everything else failed, he could always go and drown himself and dull care together.

He looked up from his half-musing attitude to see what effect such a proposition would have, and was rather pleased to see that she looked pained.

It was wicked, Blanche asserted, to joke in that way, and she begged him to try and talk sensibly again. Fancy very likely may have conjured up for her a struggling body in the muddy river, or some pleasing image of a falling form with outstretched arms, in mid-air between parapet and water.

It was a curious humour into which Harry had fallen—this kind of desperate resignation which he was trying to assume; and Blanche looked at him with an odd mixture of perplexity and sympathy, as after harking back to the blacking-brush idea again, he exclaimed suddenly, “Ah! Australia, now. What do you think of Australia? They say there are fortunes to be made there in the shepherd line. It might be

exciting, too : the chance of being potted by a savage—a real savage—scalped, and all that kind of thing. Would you like to have my scalp, Miss Villars? I'll tell them to keep it for you, if you would. Charlie might have it put in a glass case—an interesting little relic. Only say the word, and it shall be Australia. Savages, bush, scalped, or else come home with loads of sheepskins, and——”

He didn't finish his sentence aloud, but “find you married, perhaps,” was added to himself.

Blanche had never heard him talk in this bitter strain before, and her wonderment was largely mixed with resentment against his father, as she answered quickly—

“Isn't Australia rather far off? It wouldn't be pleasant to be so far away from all one's friends. We—no one would ever hear of you.”

“Perhaps there wouldn't be many who would care to.”

“Why should you think so?”

“Would you?”

"Of course I should; and I'm sure Charlie would, too."

"Ah! yes; Charlie. I dare say he would. Shall we go back again to the other room? How nice, and cheerful, and lively you must have found me!"

He rose as he finished speaking; and Blanche, without replying, took his arm, and they made their way back into the dancing-room; the heat, or the coolness of the corridor, or the excellence of the house, providing conversation on the way.

Another dance had passed while they had been away, and Blanche's disappointed partner came up to upbraid her for cutting him. Harry conducted her to her mother, talked for a few moments on common-place subjects, when they were to leave London, if they were going abroad, and so on. Said good night to Blanche, as she went off with some one else for the next dance; and then threaded his way through the rooms towards the stairs,—carrying with him the determination of more than one dowager not to ask him to her ball, for passing her daughters

without asking them to dance—cutting her own throat, he would probably have said.

Pulled up for a few moments by acquaintances among the knot of men at the top of the stairs, who were posted there to facilitate ingress and egress from the dancing-room, he arrived at last at his hat and coat, and wandered out into the street utterly oblivious of the fact that he had been engaged for two or three more dances further on. What were these prospective partners to him in his present frame of mind? And so he lit a cigar, threw his coat over his shoulders, and once more, in fancy, was sitting in the cool atmosphere of that softly-lighted, music-haunted room.

Bitter thoughts against his father mingled with the dreamy luxury of remembered tones and looks, and bred at last a fixed determination to take arms against his sea of troubles, and by opposing end them.

This was all very fine, and sounded very grand, and made him think himself a creature of heroic mould, to have shown such strength of will and depth of purpose ; and

it was a pleasant, airy fabric to contemplate the return of the chivalrous knight to claim the hand of his lady-love. But then, what was the use of having all sorts of grand notions about the great things he was going to do, if he had no means of beginning, or of putting them into execution? What could he do without money? Nothing, it appeared. And therefore, gradually, turret after turret of that airy fabric faded into mist, the walls collapsed, the foundations sank, subsided, disappeared, and, instead of the bright sunlight which had so lately shone upon its battlements, a thick darkness supervened, looming out of which might be detected the damp walls of a dingy, cold, comfortless garret.

Cheerful picture! But he was not left for long to the contemplation of it, for on turning a sudden corner he found himself face to face with Tom Manners.

"Harry, by the lord! or, by the lord Harry!" exclaimed the latter. "What are you doing out here at this time of night? What are you up to, eh?"

"No good, I expect," suggested Manners' companion.

Harry was as surprised as they were to find himself where he was; for, in the abstraction of his thoughts, he had wandered far away into the neighbourhood of Regent's Park.

"By Jove!" he answered, "I had no idea I'd gone so far. I was meditating."

"Meditating be hanged!" said Manners; "not a bit of it."

"Well, what are you doing up here, may I ask?" he rejoined, with a laugh.

"Been dining at the barracks, and are now walking soberly home."

"Oh, of course! But you're just the fellow I wanted to see, so it's rather lucky my having turned this way."

"Come on, then; we'll show you the way back. Young fellows like you are not to be trusted about the streets alone at this time of night. What did you want to see me about, old boy?" continued Manners, linking his arm in Egerton's.

Harry explained that if there was still a

vacant berth in Tom's yacht, he should be glad enough now to take it.

Of course they could make room for him, Manners said, "but I thought you were going to Scotland."

"So I was, but I'm not now;" and he turned the conversation to some outlying topic, not caring to enter into explanations before a third party, who was only a casual acquaintance.

To Manners he afterwards confided generally that he had had a row with his father about money, and that, therefore, just at present they were not on speaking terms.

"But I can lend you any money you want, old chap," Manners said, "as far as a hundred or two go. Only say the word, and I'll write you a cheque on the spot."

Harry, however, declined with many thanks. As he didn't see his way to repaying the money if he borrowed it, he had no choice, he considered, but to refuse.

"Well, if you won't, you won't, I suppose," said Manners. "But don't be shy about it, if it would be any use to you. My

dear old parent gives me as much as ever I ask for, so you needn't be afraid of my running dry."

Egerton, however, persisted ; and they sat on for some time over their cigars, discussing their arrangements, and talking over the follies to which male flesh is heir, until Morpheus began to assert himself.

They separated at the door of the club, and Egerton turned towards his new residence in St. James's Place, and was soon sleeping upon the cares and anxieties of the day, and a rough couch enough he found them.

Blanche Villars, too, was sleeping now. But it was long before sleep had come to relieve her anxious thoughts. And if her pillow was wet with recent tears, shall we like her the less that they were a woman's tears of sympathy and sorrow for the almost boy whom she loved so well ?

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT a very delightful and inspiriting sensation that is, of awaking in the morning with the dim recollection of something unpleasant having happened the day before, or with the undefined consciousness of something disagreeable in prospect! It lies in wait for the first dawn of awakening sense, and at once thrusts in its claim upon your kind attention. At first, your ideas are a little confused; you hardly comprehend what is required of your thoughts. But gradually, and with a savage particularity of detail, the subject is developed, and further sleep is out of the question for that morning, at least. The boy, waiting to be switched, enjoys much the same repose of mind as you do lying awake brooding over what is past, or nursing that wearing appre-

hension of what is to come. The flies upon the ceiling have lost their wonted attraction. Their numbers no longer stimulate conjecture. It no more delights to follow their manifold intersections and gyrations with the absorbing interest of other days. No more does the paper on the wall supply that endless entertainment for the thoughts which formerly they found in endeavouring to strike out some hitherto undiscovered pattern, some different point of view, or some new and varied combination of the lines. Such occupation has no longer charms to soothe. At least it was so with Harry Egerton.

It was late, or rather, early in the morning, when he had said good-night to Manners. It was long past ten, therefore, when he awoke from a sleep haunted by unrefreshing dreams. All sorts of wild fancies had tortured his brain through the night. Innumerable horrors had merged into each other with a painful semblance of reality. He had seen a white figure stretching out her arms to him across a dark and fearful

gulf, her eyes streaming with tears at his hopeless attempts to reach her. He had heard his father's voice forbidding him to cross, and his feet had been rooted to the ground. In vain were his struggles; in vain he sought to soothe that agonised look, to clasp her in his eager embrace. He couldn't move. And then, horror-struck, he saw her approach yet nearer to the brink—in her eagerness advance too far, and, with a piercing shriek, fall headlong into the gulf below. Down, down into the darkness he watched her white robe falling, still falling and disappearing from his view; and he wrung his hands in a frenzy of wild horror and despair, and awoke in a cold perspiration to find it was only not a reality.

What meant the dinginess of the room upon which his fevered eyes had opened? Where were the old Eton pictures, the groups of Cambridge friends, and photographs of the dear old court of Trinity, which usually adorned his bed-room walls? There was an unmistakable lodging-house

air about the place. What meant it all? Ah, what?

His mind was only too ready to awake to the occurrences of the previous day. The change soon explained itself; and that dull feeling of oppression which weighed upon his senses was soon accounted for. Here was no vision, no impracticable spectre conjured up by a morbid fancy, this image of a stern and unrelenting father which passed continually before his mind. Real, unpleasantly real, as were all the circumstances by which it was followed and surrounded, and which lost none of their reality from the entrance of his brother Philip, as they passed, for the fiftieth time, in gaunt procession before his view.

“You can afford to lie in bed till past eleven, I suppose?” was Philip’s cheerful commencement, after they had exchanged good-mornings. He himself was always up at eight o’clock. Isn’t it the case that persons of Philip Egerton’s cold, calculating, intriguing, scheming nature, are always early risers?

He was a pleasant fellow, was Philip

Egerton. He belonged to her Majesty's brigade of Guards, and was the idol of his brother officers. They almost wondered why so good a fellow had come into the regiment. For when he entered the room at the club, they used to say that it was like a sudden draught of chilly air. And, indeed, wherever he went, he carried with him such a hearty expression that every company in which he appeared could testify to the enlivening influence of his presence. He had his little faults, however, like the rest of us. Avarice and cunning were the chief flaws in his character; and his unfortunate brother was the innocent cause of jealousy and hate also finding a corner in his nature.

It was always understood in the family that Harry was to come in for his mother's fortune—some twenty thousand pounds—at his father's death. And Philip had set his heart upon altering this arrangement to his own benefit, if he possibly could. He knew that, although he had far the most influence over his father, Harry was his favourite son,

and he bore him a proportionate amount of ill-will in consequence. He knew also that this money was at his father's disposal; and he considered that it would be pleasant indeed if he could further his own interest, and gratify his feeling of dislike at the same time. He was therefore always very respectful to his father, but to Harry his manner was not always distinguished by the cordiality which brothers sometimes show towards one another.

It is not to be supposed, then, that Harry felt very ardently disposed towards him. His was a likely nature enough to nourish feelings of natural affection. But such feelings do not exist of their own strength alone, when all sorts of adverse influences of incompatible characters, dispositions, tempers, time, place, and pursuits are brought to bear against them. The natural attraction which members of the same family feel towards one another is a mere instinct, which may be, and often is, developed into real attachment. But this attachment results from the ordinary causes from which friend-

ship and love usually spring. If these influences do not exist, the feeling of one member of a family towards another will never get beyond an indifferent interest in each other's existence. And, therefore, when you hear that one man feels so great a friendship for another, that you might suppose they were brothers, one is rather inclined to resent the insult which is offered to friendship by such a comparison. Just as if all brothers loved each other with the warmth and depth of affection which characterise real friendship. Just as if half the brothers in the world entertained any such feelings towards one another. It may be a very undesirable family fact that brothers do not usually love each other as brothers should. But any one may prove to his satisfaction that it is so, if he take the trouble to analyse his fraternal acquaintance. Great friendships may exist between brothers; and, considering what opportunities they have of finding out each other's good points, it may, perhaps, be matter for surprise that they do not oftener exist. But to liken the

deep, strong, ardent affection of a well-rooted friendship, which is much more aptly described as a love passing the love of women—to liken this to the common-place sympathy which brothers instinctively feel for one another, is merely a slight upon one of the purest and most unselfish emotions of which human nature is capable.

Undoubtedly, in the present instance, such a comparison would have been most inapt. For any affection which Harry Egerton might have been disposed to feel towards Philip, had long ago succumbed to the inevitable influence of Philip's discordant nature.

And so it was that his brother's entrance into his bed-room gave a deeper hue to the gloomy colour of Harry's thoughts, and came between his mind and any brighter ray that might have stolen in, like a cloud before the sun.

"I was up late last night," he answered to Philip's remark upon his late rising.

"I suppose so ; you generally are," Philip rejoined, in even more contemptuous and

sarcastic tones than those in which he was in the habit of addressing him. He could ill conceal his satisfaction at the unexpected turn in his favour which events had so recently taken, by the withdrawal of Harry from his father's house. And there was something so pleasant to Philip's mind in striking a man who was down (particularly when that man was his own brother), that he determined to make the most of the occasion.

"I dare say you'll alter your habits now," he continued, his face lighted up with a malicious sneer. "My father tells me you've been asking him for money to pay your debts with."

"Yes, I did," rejoined Harry; "and I think he might have given it to me. I never asked him to pay any bills for me before."

"And, if I might venture to prophesy, you probably will not again. You were really surprised, then, that he actually refused to accede to your request. In fact, I dare say you hardly calculated what the result would

be.” And as Philip distilled these sentences with concentrated malice through his mean, thin lips, he glanced sidelong at Harry to see whether he was prolonging his torture with the desired effect.

“No one asked you to prophesy,” Harry answered; “and what my calculations may have been don’t concern you, as far as I can see. Did you come here to play the prophet?” He looked at Philip as he spoke with a contempt which unfortunately was lost upon that individual, for his eyes, as usual, were looking in any direction but towards the person to whom he was speaking, or by whom he was addressed.

“By no means,” Philip replied; “I was the bearer of a message.” And he stopped again, that Harry might enjoy the suspense a little longer, a wreathèd smile curling about his mouth, which watered with the delightful anticipation of having disagreeable news to communicate.

“Well—out with it,” said Harry, with some irritation; “I’m sure I don’t want you to stay here all day.”

"It was a message," Philip said, with imperturbable deliberation, "a message from my father, to the effect that he had directed his bankers to pay you the sum of two hundred pounds per annum, in quarterly payments; and that any further applications for money from you would have no attention whatever paid to them."

This intelligence was articulated with such distinct and evident satisfaction by Philip Egerton to his brother, that that brother looked at him for a moment in wonder that such a nature could exist and be so nearly connected to himself. Then the meaning of his words came home to him. True, it was but what he had expected; but to have all this told him in this way by his brother—his allowance cut down—never to speak to his father again. Even in his harshness, he was still his father; and he had been so different hitherto. Harry didn't answer for a moment or two after Philip finished speaking. He felt a sort of choking in his throat, and his firmness might have given way, if pride had not come to the

rescue. Philip should see no sign of emotion. But Philip had already, with a secret thrill of satisfaction, noticed the quivering lip, before Harry, with assumed indifference, replied—

“Well, I suppose I shall have to get on as well as I can on that ;—it’s deuced little to live upon.”

“If you ask my opinion,” Philip rejoined, “I think my father has allowed you a great deal more than you had any right to expect. I have often warned you against your extravagance ; and now, as you wouldn’t take my advice, you see the result.”

“My father didn’t send you here to taunt me with my position, I suppose, did he ?” cried Harry, firing up.

Philip, without noticing the question, continued—“You chose to run on into debt, without any means of paying your bills, swindling people wherever you went, and now——”

“I’m hanged if I stand this, Philip !” exclaimed Harry, sitting up in bed. “I can put up with abuse from my father, but I’m

not going to be called names by you. So if you haven't anything civil to say, you'd better go."

His cheek was flushed, and his eye lighted up with an anger which was seldom to be seen there; and his brother, accustomed to dictate to him, was even startled into a look of surprise.

Slightly elevating his eyebrows, Philip replied that he was sorry his company was not agreeable to him, and with a face where vindictive cunning lurked behind a feigned indifference, he wished him good morning, and turned slowly towards the door.

Poor Harry! he sank down upon his pillow again, more miserable than ever, now that his momentary passion was over; and he reflected with just apprehension on the probable consequences of his late outburst. He knew his brother well enough to be sure that he would use every handle against him, would turn every point to his disadvantage in his father's eyes, and pervert and distort his smallest actions, so as to place them in an unfavourable light. He had made it still

more certain now that his father would not change his mind. "Well, it can't be helped," he exclaimed, at length; "it's done, and it's no good thinking about it."

Acting upon the idea, he jumped briskly out of bed, and proceeded to the club to breakfast, and look over the paper before strolling into the Park, where the society of other idlers might have a cheering effect.

One of Mr. Solomon's young women fastened a white rose-bud in the button-hole of his coat (economy in shillings had not occurred to him as yet), and the glaring pavement of Piccadilly provided a friend who was tending in the same direction.

Walking in Rotten Row was not much in Harry's line; in fact, I believe he had rather superior notions upon the subject. But his father's horses being no longer at his command, he was naturally reduced to his feet, and Maud Greville to some useful employment, perhaps, indoors. I wonder how much of the emptiness and silliness to be met with in London drawing-rooms is to be attributed to that morning ride, when the

round of pleasure is begun so early. It is said by them of old time that it used to be the custom for young ladies to consider the accomplishment of their minds during those hours that are now given up to the display of the figure, and that the result was apparent in their better ideas on the subject of woman's duty. Beauty of mind used to be considered as valuable for matrimonial purposes as beauty of person. It appears that it is not so now, since it is so little cultivated. And besides the number of dancing dolls who owe their existence as such to Rotten Row, it may also be partly credited with the education of that poor, dear, washy, little creature, the dancing man—that sweet essence of simper, twaddle, and affectation. For if there were no “aw, devilish pretty girls” to stare at, there would be no attraction for those pitiable objects who sit upon the rails and suck their canes or their cigars, and contemplate with vacant interest the graceful horsemanship which they think they admire. When ignorance is bliss, it seems cruel to tell them that all the time they are

studying that becoming posture against the railings, they are only setting themselves up as Aunt Sallies for sensible men and women to exercise their contempt upon.

Those curious old creatures, too, who look upon life from a serious and moral point of view, tell us that our intellects were meant to be employed, and that life was never intended to be one long round of vapid, empty, frivolous pleasure. Funny old things! what droll notions they do have, to be sure! I don't fancy such strange ideas had troubled Harry's mind very much. At all events, they were evidently not obtruding themselves at present. For there he was, frock-coated, gloved, and flowered, stalking up and down with a couple of friends in the middle of the naughty costumes, to all appearance as happy as the gayest Lothario there; and as innocent of anything disagreeable that morning as if his brother had never had any existence.

CHAPTER VII.

PHILIP meanwhile had walked slowly across the Green Park, after leaving his brother's room, meditating with downcast eyes how best he could turn the present crisis to his own advantage. The fact that Harry had dared to lose his temper with him in his present position gave an additional spur to his malignity, and he clung with a horribly vindictive delight to the hope of driving him yet further to the wall; and with a perfectly marvellous intensity of unnatural meanness gloated over the prospect of lowering him yet further in his father's estimation. It would be a congenial but a dangerous employment. Much caution would be required; much judgment and careful watching of opportunities to let fall the casual word which might rankle in his mind to

Harry's disadvantage ; for Philip was shrewd enough to know that though his father would not easily alter his mind, yet that he would not be willing to hear Harry openly abused by any one else. Indeed, it had already even crossed Mr. Egerton's mind that he might have acted, perhaps, with unnecessary severity, and that at some future time he would probably be sorry for having allowed himself to be carried away as he had been by the angry feelings of the moment ; that Philip's cold presence would hardly supply the pleasure which Harry's warmer nature had given him ; and, above all, that for the future he would be without his customary companion. But he endeavoured to persuade himself that he had only done what he was perfectly justified in doing, and what, in fact, it was his duty to do. How dared Harry count upon him to pay his debts ? His allowance had been liberal. Had it not been, the case might, perhaps, have been different. How was he to know that he would not come to him again in the same way, if he satisfied his present demands

—encourage him in his extravagance—“No, no; I was right—quite right; couldn’t have done otherwise than I did.”

With such-like arguments he worked himself to a pitch of virtuous self-complacency, and contemplated his conduct with a forced satisfaction, until another twinge of natural affection (for it was affection rather than qualms of conscience which prompted such feelings) would suggest doubts of the propriety of what he had done.

Still doubts would occasionally arise on the score of duty too. But these were more easily set at rest.

Mr. Egerton was not much in the habit of acting from a sense of duty, or looking upon his position as a parent from that point of view. Conventional habit, educational routine, private inclination, pique, or prejudice, dictated to him, as to many others, his conduct towards his sons. But such parents do, I suppose, sometimes escape from their own selfish interests and wishes, and in such periods of aberration look upon the moral aspect of their position, and consider duty, in

some slight degree, as a motive to action. It is not to be wondered at, when these seasons of self-forgetfulness are so few, that, as in the present instance, these worthy people should fall into error as to what is the right or the wrong course to be pursued. For they can hardly be expected to have a right knowledge of a subject to which they have devoted so little attention.

Mr. Egerton would induce himself to believe that he had acted with a most praiseworthy and excellent severity in refusing to pay Harry's debts,—that he was showing a proper regard for the responsibilities of his position in having nothing further to do with a son who had so recklessly got himself into difficulties,—and that it was a most judicious wisdom which prompted him to withhold from his son a profession where he would probably spend a great deal more money than he had already managed to get through. And so he looked upon himself as quite an injured man, in that he had a son who had compelled him, against his natural fatherly

feeling, to act so stern, and just, and wise a part. It seems, however, from the writings of a well-known moralist (not to say from the dictates of common sense), that it is possible to take another view of the case than that upon which Mr. Egerton took his stand so complacently.

Paley will tell you that the reasonable expectations of a child are to be postponed to the exigencies of his situation,—that a reasonable provision for the child's happiness is one of the requirements of a parent's duty,—and that this provision includes a situation suited to his habits and reasonable expectations, a competent provision for the exigencies of that situation, and a probable security for his virtue.

Assuming Paley to be an authority on a question of duty, was Mr. Egerton right in renouncing all further obligation respecting his son, because he had formed unreasonable expectations on the score of his debts? Fully admitting that these expectations were unreasonable, that his allowance had been ample for a younger son in his position,

and that he had no *right* to expect any further, was Mr. Egerton, with all this weight of argument on his side, justified in neglecting all further consideration of his interest? He persuaded himself to think that he was. But our moralist above quoted appears to think otherwise. And who will say that to turn a man loose upon the world, without any definite aim or object in life, saddled with debt, oppressed with idleness, and surrounded by the temptations incident to embarrassed circumstances and reduced means—who will say that this is the way to afford any probable security for his virtue? He will inevitably “embrace every expedient which presents a hope of supplying his necessities,” regardless of his own virtue or the public advantage. And the father who does so use his son will be “defrauding the community of a benefactor, and bequeathing them a nuisance.” It would appear, then, that if Mr. Egerton had exercised a correct judgment in the matter of his son’s debts, he would have relieved him from his difficulties, and started him fair in the world.

Moreover, when he said to himself that he should only be encouraging Harry in his extravagance if he paid his debts, he was only arguing against himself a want of knowledge of his son's character. In many instances the assumption would have been reasonable enough ; but in Harry's case it was not so. He was very far from being reckless, unprincipled, or vicious. His extravagance was no confirmed habit which he had no moral courage to shake off. His excesses had sprung from mere gaiety of heart and animal spirits, thoughtlessness, and the exuberant impulse to enjoyment. He had gambled, and betted, and lost money for the sake of the excitement which it furnished to his somewhat restless nature ; but he was no confirmed gambler, who could not do without this feverish excitement. He had plenty of moral courage when he chose to exercise it, and had shown it (as his father might have seen upon reflection) by giving up all kinds of extravagance since he left Cambridge, and paying off by instalments a great many of his bills.

But Mr. Egerton knew nothing of this. He was a kind and affectionate father enough; but he was a stern man. He never treated his son as a friend, and although Harry was attached to him, he feared him at the same time. Thus there was no confidence between them,—and without that the father could have no insight into the character of the son,—and having no knowledge of his character, how could he be expected not to fall into errors of judgment upon exceptional occasions of the present kind? Any parent who takes a principle to be of universal application to all his children—who brings them up by rule, without making himself acquainted with the individual bent of their several characters, and modifying his rule in its application to each, must inevitably commit mistakes which will turn out, some of them, if not hurtful, at least useless members of society.

And when Mr. Egerton retired behind his injured paternity to contemplate the enormity of his son's conduct, it might have been well if from that glass-house retreat he had

looked back a little into his own former life. If he had not kept his eyes so steadily fixed upon the pound before his feet, he might not have considered that his son's conduct was so utterly unpardonable as his outraged feelings delighted to represent it. In his own youth he had been wild and extravagant to the last degree. And if he could only have allowed his imagination to carry him back to the period of life at which Harry now was, he might have been disposed to look more leniently upon the follies which he himself had found so difficult of resistance. He might have remembered how surrounded he had been by various influences and temptations, which appealed peculiarly to the passions and inclinations of youth, which as yet reason was not strong enough to control. And seen by the light of his own experience, Harry's faults might have appeared venial, perhaps. But that light was never turned upon them, until in Mr. Egerton's opinion it was too late to correct his mistake. And, therefore, it is not unlikely that he will now demonstrate for

our edification that the injudicious treatment of an undutiful father is quite as likely to bring about the ruin of a son as are the prodigal instincts of the unfortunate youth himself.

Philip Egerton, on arriving again in Eaton Place, and hearing that his father was in his own room in the worst of tempers, thought it judicious not to visit him just yet, and took his way to the drawing-room instead.

Mrs. Greville and Maud were seated there, and the latter laid down her book as Philip entered, and exclaimed, "Well, Philip, what have you done? Did you see Harry? Is he very miserable?"

"On the contrary," Philip replied, "I found him luxuriating in bed. And he was pleased to tell me that he did not require my company."

"Oh! Philip, he never said that," cried Maud.

"Ask him."

"Then you must have said something very unkind."

"I dare say my father's message was not

very agreeable news. He seemed at least to find it a little unpleasant."

"But you offered to help him out of his scrape?—to lend him some money?"

Philip's face assumed an expression of gentle contempt. "Lend him more money to throw away as before! No, I hardly did that."

"Well, I should if I had been you," rejoined Maud, indignantly. "I think it was very mean of you not to. But you always are doing something nasty or disagreeable. I don't like you a hundredth part as much as I do Harry."

Maud's candour brought down a mild rebuke from her mother, and Philip rejoined, sarcastically,—“Complimentary as usual, Maud. I'm afraid I can't pretend to the same qualifications for your esteem which my brother no doubt possesses. I have not a long string of suffering tradesmen to recommend me to your kind interest.”

“That's right—sneer at him because Uncle Philip has treated him so badly. It's just like you.”

Philip regarded her with a peculiarly pleasant smile, and Mrs. Greville interposed, asking whether Mr. Egerton really could mean what he had said,—that Harry was never to come back again.

Since luncheon on the previous day, Mr. Egerton had not appeared to his family, but had sent for Philip on his return the night before, and had delivered to him the message which he had broken so tenderly to his brother that morning. To Mrs. Greville's question Philip answered that his father had expressed such an intention, and he thought there was every probability of his abiding by it.

After some further conversation on the subject, Philip left the room, and Maud broke out into an eloquent tirade against his heartlessness and want of feeling.

As for Mrs. Greville, she didn't know what to think of it, and for want of any better way of expressing her perplexity, indulged herself with a few tears.

The object of all this sympathy and various emotion having taken his fill of early society,

turned his steps in the direction of Park Lane, with the intention of lunching with his good aunt, Lady Belvedere. It was just possible, he thought, that she might be able to suggest to him some way out of his present difficulties—for Lady Belvedere was a good-natured and pleasant woman enough, though she *was* a thorough woman of the world.

Her husband had been many years in his grave. And though she was by no means young herself, yet society still had as great charms for her as ever, and she was as gay and as dissipated as the youngest married woman in the town. Out every night, even to balls, and only too pleased when a niece, or other appendage, gave her an excuse for going to entertainments where, otherwise, she used to say that an old woman's room was better than her company. But though she might not always go, she always liked to have a card for anything that was going on at any house where she visited. She couldn't bear the idea of dropping out of the world. Society had become almost a second nature to her; and the notion of

being shelved was as disagreeable a subject for contemplation as the grave itself. But religion was by no means neglected by Lady Belvedere. With her worldly engagements were constantly mingled the more spiritual pleasures of confession and very many other High-Church entertainments of a similarly edifying nature. There was a little oratory attached to her bed-room, filled up with all kinds of pretty decorations, where her ladyship was wont to throw off periodically her religious fervours, and where, for that matter, she might have thrown off her allegiance to the English Church also. And even as Harry entered, a black gentleman of staid and smooth demeanour, and straight-cut coat, was descending the stairs, on his way, no doubt, from some refreshing exercise.

But whether her visitor was priest or Protestant, Lady Belvedere's spirits had not suffered much by his ministrations, and she received Harry as cheerfully as usual.

It was a little annoying, however, he thought, when he had delivered himself of the situation, to find that his aunt treated

the whole affair, which to him seemed of such magnitude, as if there was nothing to be very much surprised at, and talked about it in a matter-of-fact kind of way, as if such things were of every-day occurrence.

“And so you are actually turned out of the house,” she said, quite pleasantly.

“No mistake about it,—traps and all,” he answered.

“Then you’ll have to go into lodgings somewhere.”

Undoubtedly, Harry said, he should have to do so—nay, he had already done so.

“And it’s all about a few hundred pounds! I’m sure your father could very well spare that, my dear. I know when he was a young man he used over and over again to come to his father to have his debts paid, and got them paid too. I’ve no patience with the man. And I dare say he’ll stick to what he says. He’s as obstinate as a stone.”

It may have occurred, perhaps, to Lady Belvedere that since a few hundreds would cover all her nephew’s debts, she might

have a little triumph over her brother by paying them for him. But then she checked the impulse, and thought that his father was the proper person to pay them, and he ought to have paid them, and he should pay them.

Accordingly, she went on to Harry,—
“And so you are only to have two hundred a-year; that isn’t very much, is it?”

Remarkably little, he thought, for a gentleman to live upon, with any sort of comfort; particularly with an army of greedy duns clamouring for a share.

“Why don’t you propose to an heiress?” his aunt continued. “You are good-looking enough. And you know you are said to be so like me that that’s only a compliment to myself.”

Harry laughed, and said that surely his aunt didn’t suppose he would ever marry a woman for her money. “Fancy saddling oneself for life with a nuisance!”

“There’s Miss Jones, now,” Lady Belvedere said, disregarding his objection: “three thousand a-year, and a charming place in the country.”

“But what good would three thousand a-year be? I don’t call that an heiress. One couldn’t do anything on that.”

“You are ambitious, young gentleman. Well, let me see,—Lady Mary Boyd has money, but they say she wants to marry a duke. I wish she may get one. Ah! Miss Grant, now,—what should you think of her? She is a little older than you, perhaps, but not bad-looking. And they say she *will* have a very large fortune. There’s an uncle, or something, in the way at present; but she has six thousand a-year clear now. That I know for certain.”

“Miss Grant not bad-looking!” exclaimed Harry. “My dear aunt, you must be joking: she’s positively ugly. I don’t think I ever saw an heiress that wasn’t more or less so.”

“To make up, I suppose, for their having so much money. But if you won’t have anything to say to my heiresses, I don’t know what I’m to do for you.”

“It would be such a bore, too, being married,” Harry said. “Just fancy, you

know, one couldn't run in and out of the opera and balls, and places, just as one liked, any more. There would always be a carriage to be called, or a cloak to be looked after, or something of the kind." (There was just one person for whom Harry thought he shouldn't mind doing all this.)

"You young men are getting so terribly selfish," Lady Belvedere rejoined; "your clubs make you so comfortable, and you find such amusement in the society of the improprieties of the town, that I think you could manage to get on without us altogether. What do you do with yourself, now? Do you go to all sorts of queer places?"

"Not at all," Harry said; he was a very soberly-conducted young person.

"People say, you know," continued Lady Belvedere, "that you are paying great attentions to Miss Villars. You mustn't go and lose your heart there, or you'll have none left for my heiress."

Harry reddened slightly as he answered that Miss Villars' brother was a great

friend of his, and that therefore he knew her very well.

“You must take care, though, for she’s a charming girl. I wonder,—and so does every one else,—that she has not married before now. They say that she refused Lord Christchurch.”

“Did she?” was the reply. “When do you leave town? Are you going abroad?” And so the conversation branched off into general topics, and Harry went away soon afterwards, Lady Belvedere promising to afford him any facilities in her power for making up to her especial favourite, Cornelia Grant.

This was prospectively very satisfactory, no doubt, but it afforded no solution for present difficulties; and for several days Harry’s duns and long-suffering Cambridge tradesmen led him what is graphically called the life of the damned. Writs, too, were of no infrequent occurrence, and when these had been disposed of, he found his exchequer reduced to a very low ebb. Goodwood was frequently in his thoughts just at

this time. Why shouldn't he go down there for the week, and throw over Manners? He might win a pot of money, and pay them all off. Delightful thought! But supposing he were to lose, no money to pay, no chance of being able to settle! Under the circumstances he decided that it would not be gentlemanlike to bet,—rather hard upon confiding bookmakers.

Why not go through the Bankruptcy Court? he thought. He should pay off all his creditors whenever he got any money afterwards, and it would save him from being always pestered with duns. Besides, his father might come to reason if he heard that he was going to appear in the papers. He had doubts, however, upon that point, and then it sounded so very low, being a bankrupt. People would always think him more or less of a blackguard,—that he wanted to do his creditors out of their money,—even though they might know the peculiar circumstances of his case. So he gave up that idea, too, for the present.

Then the mysterious words which Mrs.

Greville had accidentally let fall about some secret connected with him ; these would occur to his mind occasionally, and he would turn and twist them about in every direction, in the hope of extorting some prospect of better days in store. But it was no use ; he could make nothing out of them ; he must chance it for the present, and trust to something turning up. Hope told him that he couldn't go on in that kind of way for ever.

Accordingly, after promising Mrs. Greville that he wouldn't go to any of those horrid gambling places abroad, and after assuring Maud that she should see him at Castle Greville in August, he left his duns and his bills behind him, towards the middle of July, and joined Manners, and the others of his party, at Cowes.

No address had been left at his lodgings, so that, at all events for the next two or three months, he calculated upon living in comparative peace.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT a freedom, what a buoyancy, lightness, and exuberant sense of enjoyment, there seemed to be in the fresh sea breezes of the Solent, after the sweltering heat of July pavements, and the asphyxiating atmosphere of London drawing-rooms ! And what an ease and a comfort there were in the light garments of semi-civilisation, after the monstrous propriety of St. James's Street !

That channel, too—so bright, and green, and cool in the afternoon sun—alive with vessels of every size and rig, whose snowy sails were set off by the wooded background of the Isle of Wight. No wonder everything looked full of life, and brimful of spirits, in that invigorating air. Little sailing boats were skimming along the island shores ; cutters, with dazzling white sheets, were

scudding backwards and forwards, tacking, chasing, intersecting each other, with such a gaiety and abandonment,—all enjoying themselves so thoroughly, and so pleased, apparently, with their own performances, that it was impossible to watch them without feeling some reflection of their rollicking delight. Steamers were bustling to and fro, full of noisy passengers ; and yachts' boats, full of blue-bedizened ladies, danced up and down in the waves of foam which they left behind. Little boats and big boats swarmed about the great iron sides of the lions which lay majestically at anchor ; and the dark sails of some sluggish collier would here and there be put to shame by stately schooners, as they spread their spotless canvas to the breeze, and strode away to the deep upon the ebbing tide. Everything seemed to sparkle and effervesce in that bright, healthy atmosphere. And Manners' cheery greeting, as the steamer drew alongside the pier, was a fit coping-stone to Harry's new-born sense of freedom and delight.

The yacht's boat was ashore, and one of

Harry's future companions, whose acquaintance he had yet to make. His luggage was committed to the care of a couple of red-capped sailors, and a few strokes of the oar brought them alongside a good-sized schooner. A dapper captain receives them at the gangway; and, as the polished deck reflects their arrival, a rough head emerges from the cabin stairs, with a "How do, Harry?" which is responded to by, "Skindles, you beggar, how are you?" and some shaking of hands. The owner of the rough head in question was an old Eton friend of Egerton and Manners, who had other names by which he was not known, Skindles being the tenacious offspring of some Maidenhead adventure, the particulars of which history does not relate.

He made the fourth, and last, of their party; and as Manners had stood sponsor for Rivers being a good fellow, and as the yacht was fitted up with every comfort which luxury could sigh for, it would be odd, Harry thought, if his cruise was not a pleasant one.

For a day or two they lingered about Cowes,—going ashore, in the morning, to lounge about, or read the papers, or chat with other yachtsmen at the club; in the afternoon, up sail and away round Bembridge-down, or across to Portsmouth.

Another day, round the south side of the island, lying to off Scratchell's Bay, to murder the pensive gull, or to agitate the melancholy cormorant by the pattering of pea-rifle bullets about his solitary perch,—landing at Freshwater Gate to be gazed at by the idlers on the beach, and to delight the eye of Mr. Summer Tourist by the sight of some real yachtsman, straw hat, ribbon, and all. A cutter, in such a bay, is sufficiently exciting to the peaceable inhabitants. Every glass is at once unsheathed and levelled; every apology for a telescope brought out and fixed. Conjecture becomes rampant; rig, tonnage, ownership, are discussed with the most absorbing interest. But if a *schooner* brings up in sight of shore—unfortunately, this is not a sensational novel. The Scotch coast, though, for a

hospitable sensation. There, an Irishman might say, you have only to whisper, "Howdoodoo?" and echo instantly answers, "Come and dine." And pleasant enough it is, ordering round your boat to go and dine, and returning in the silence of the early night, wrapped in the luxury of a good cigar.

Those are charming scenes, those Scotch lochs, when the mountains are free of mist, and stand out clearly defined against the dark blue of the sky, which is glittering with myriads of bright stars; when the full round moon slowly rises from behind that lofty peak, and casts a long line of silvery light across the motionless water; when the leap of a salmon along the dark wooded shores, or the splash of the oar echoing through moonlit rocks, is the only sound which breaks the solemn stillness of the night; when conversation sinks away subdued by the sweet seduction of so serene and soft a calm—so bright, so clear, so pure, as if no place was there for human voice or thought; where admiration merges into love, and gratitude,

and heavenly repose, and mountain, moon, and stars to the thrilled soul proclaim—

“The hand that made us is divine.”

The passage from Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, to Loch Laxford, in the extreme north of Scotland, is not often made in so short a space of time as that in which we have just accomplished it; nor, in all probability, will the return journey ever be performed at the same expeditious rate of speed as that which we now propose to employ—for here we are again on the Beacon-down, laboriously toiling up the slope, to look at the view from the top; wondering whether we shall ever get there, and cordially endorsing the sentiments which Egerton and Manners are expressing as to the heat and exertion which steep climbing entails.

Once arrived at the Beacon, the view amply repaid the expenditure of labour and energy which they had been deploring on the way. And they sat down on a mound to rest, cool, and enjoy the extensive panorama.

The descriptive muse is sighing for metre.
May she not be indulged?—

No shade upon that barren height there grew,
Nor bower cool beneath that beacon tree ;
No temper to the mid-day heat was found
In all that cloudless spectacle of blue,
Which canopied the extended world below,
But softest airs came tripping o'er the down,
And gently soothed the splendour of the day.
What waste of waters, and of land what range,
What varied features of earth's changeful scene,
Alternate hence invite the wandering gaze !
League upon league to farthest verge outstretched,
Confined at length by downward-bending sky,
Rolls the vast sweep of ocean's glittering plain,
Now here, now there, by glint of sail relieved ;
Stern rocks encroachment on its bounds forbid,
And dazzling steep, where dark-contrasted show
Deep caverns hollowed by the surging tide,
Or fretted by the strife of prisoned winds ;
Red barrier of sand takes up the line,
And curving bays prolong the white-fringed shore,
Where scarcely breaks the ripple on the strand ;
Then points successive shoot into the deep,
And bluff-projecting crag, and storm-driven chine,
And frowning reef engage the excursive eye,
And lure it onward to the far-off line
Where fades the upland into summer haze.
Now landward turning, view the prospect wide
Of swelling down, white-dotted with the fleece
Of pasturing sheep ; those green-embosomed roofs
Below, and leafy lanes, whose shady cool,
Melodious with the tiny song of birds,
Invites the dreaming poet and the sage.
From furze-crowned hillock, woodland copse and fen,
Glide over Yar's smooth-winding, silvery stream,
And Solent broad like river ever-flowing,
Across to Hurst's proud castellated strength,
And Hampshire's dark immensity of shade.

Again from distant Cowes that gaze recall,
And here from jutting imminence of rock
Peer deeply down into that airy void,
Wing-swept by myriad flight of ocean fowl,
Where pinions numberless increasing ply,
And cries discordant rend the troubled air—
A Babel of confusion strangely blent.
See there, remote above the ungenial crowd,
The croaking raven plume his glossy wing ;
And there the falcon, swooping from his perch,
With trembling motion poisoning o'er the deep ;
There smoothly glides the undulating gull,
And gloomy cormorants stand sentinel,
Swift pigeons shoot from out each rocky cleft,
And bustling puffins wing their rapid flight,
While gannet sails along on stately wing,
'Mid all the rush and turmoil unconcerned.
With feathered life each narrow ledge is set,
Each craggy point with varied plumage dressed ;
Compact in serried ranks they stand arrayed,
And circling thousands envious flit around.
But see ! from point to point with giddy bound,
Quicker and yet quicker, speed precipitate,
Into the depths, successive ledges scorned,
A loosened fragment leaps its downward course.
Commotion spreads among the timid throng,
From cleft and cranny, narrow rift and nook,
A seaward-hurrying host affrighted pour ;
And multiform disturbance darks the air,
As sea-mew's cry, and gannet's hoarser clang,
And puffin, diver, guillamot, and gull,
Awake the sounding echoes of the cliff,
To fling their blended discord to the main.

“Curious sight, ain't it?” said Manners.
“Should you like to be one of those beggars
who go dangling down there after eggs?
I'm blest if I should !”

Harry perfectly sympathised with him in his preference for a natural death. And they turned away from the doubtful projection where they had been standing for the last few minutes, and faced towards the shore again.

“That, I suppose, is Farringford?” Egerton said presently, pointing to the chimneys of a house below them nestling in a sea of green. He wondered whether the Poet Laureate was incubating at the time, and drew a fancy picture of him enveloped in a cloud of inspiration, communing with abstractions in some elevated world to which he had not yet been admitted.

Many smart things were said by both of them, and very facetious indeed they were, at the expense of the unconscious owner of that little nook; that is to say, they laughed very much at each other’s humours, which I suppose implies a kind of subjective wit.

“Should you like to be a poet, Tom?” asked Harry. And the idea tickled him immensely. “I can fancy you,” he said, “grinding away at some sentimental effu-

sion,—or better still, something grand and heroic, the immortal bard business—*πολύ-φλόσβοιο θαλάσσης*—that kind of thing, you know!”

Manners quite appreciated the absurdity of the notion, but at the same time he offered to back himself against Harry for anything he liked.

“Done along with you,” was the reply. “What’s the subject to be? Something sentimental for choice. I’m a regular devil at sentiment!”

It was not easy, however, to fix upon a subject, and their poetic efforts, therefore, were not at present called into play—fortunately, perhaps, for the reader.

Manners, probably, had hardly opened a book of poetry, except under compulsion, during the whole course of his life, and therefore looked upon the poetic faculty as something weird and supernatural.

“You know I’d much sooner be a man,” he said, quite seriously, when the habits of the poet-animal came under discussion. “Do you suppose Tennyson, now, cats and

drinks like an ordinary mortal? I should think he was above that kind of thing."

"Oh! I don't know that," said Egerton; "one often comes across creatures of the kind in London; and they're commonplace-looking mortals enough, a good many of them. I'm sure one hears fellows that are by way of being philosophers, talking greater nonsense very often than sensible men would."

"Well, I don't suppose we shall interfere with one another much," laughed Manners; "so I don't mind their amusing themselves in their own way, if they like it."

Having delivered himself of this considerate assurance, that he had no objection to these poor benighted creatures continuing to cultivate the strange line which they had adopted,—an assurance which, had they known it, would no doubt have contributed materially to the advancement of their studies,—Tom, with a satisfied sense of having said a good-natured thing, changed the conversation to some other subject, which came more within the domain of his interest as a man and a brother.

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The next day they were to have started for the French coast ; but starting for the French coast in a blazing sun and breathless atmosphere was, as the captain said, “a thing some of them Yankee chaps might be able to do—never knowed what they couldn’t do, to hear ’em talk ; but there, he couldn’t do it.”

A caustic man that captain, and one who had pores which could appreciate a thermometer at 110°. He was more expressive, perhaps, than grammatical or choice in his description of the weather, when he said, applying a flowing silk handkerchief to his shining face, “Well, I mostly sweats pretty free, but that ’ere, it do be uncommon hot.”

There was nothing for it but to lie on deck, whistling for the breeze which never came, and basking under an improvised awning, drinking claret-cup, or reading some yellow-covered novel with thrilling picture on its back.

Egerton and the young gentleman who rejoiced in the *sobriquet* of Skindles are thus whiling away the time in light literature

and smoke, while Manners and their other shipmate have gone ashore, to pick up any crumbs of news which may be going.

Skindles is deep in a yellow cover, which is almost too exciting for the state of the thermometer; and Harry, in lightest costume, is lying with his hands under his head, and eyes closed, enjoying that soft, delicious, dreamy ecstasy of sloth which such a languid atmosphere induces. Happy visions must have been peopling that luxurious trance with bright images of love or other ravishment; for, though his eyes were closed, his face would be lit up at times with an expression of such serene happiness, that you might have supposed the Elysian fields had been opened to his gaze. But then some different thought came floating through his dream, and the light would die away into a settled hard repose; the lips would be compressed; and, in place of that reflection from the mansions of the blest, a something, like the faintest echo of a sigh, would seem to issue from the depths within.

It was after a change of this kind that he suddenly opened his eyes, and turning towards his companion, asked how it was that he was not at Goodwood. The other roused himself from his novel, took up the silver cup which stood between them, and while he raised it to his lips, answered carelessly, "No money, old boy."

"But you never had any money, had you? What difference does that make?"

"Well, not much, certainly. But you see, young fellow, I owe those infernal ring-men such a —— lot, that I don't care to face 'em just at present."

Being of a merry rather than a wise turn, Mr. Skindles had a jovial and reckless enjoyment of life, lost his money regularly with the greatest unconcern, and, if his losses ever did occasion him to feel a little 'down,' his manner certainly never betrayed the feeling.

As Harry did not immediately reply, he went on—"It ain't only book-makers either, but there are such a deuce of a lot of duns wanting to be paid, confound 'em—writs

out, too, all over the place—any amount of reasons for keeping out of the way for a bit ; and there's nothing like a yacht for that. In the first place, don't you see, they don't know where to find you ; and, if they did, you could give 'em the slip at any moment. They haven't a chance, my dear boy, not a chance—not a d——d ghost of a chance.”

“Except in a calm,” suggested Harry, who had closed his eyes again, and listened, with an appreciating smile, to Skindles' oration.

“Oh ! hang it, no ; they'd hardly try that on, would they ? ” he asked, in some alarm.

Harry was hardly up to the exertion of answering, so he allowed the lingering remains of his late smile to expand into a fresh one ; and the other continued—

“Never fear ; you may take your oath Tom wouldn't stand that ; he's a rare good fellow is Tom—always do a fellow a good turn if he can.”

Egerton had quite energy enough to en-

dorse that sentiment—one of the best-natured, thoroughly good fellows he knew anywhere—and being a little roused by this temporary enthusiasm, he proceeded to confide to his friend, that in the matter of duns they were both metaphorically and literally in the same boat. “They’ve been at me like a pack of jackals,” he said, “for the last few months. I had to go to my father at last, and he told me he’d be shot if he paid a single one of them—what you may call very cheerful, exceedingly paternal, and remarkably pleasant.” With this he lay back again, gazed up into space, and mused.

“Oh! that’s nothing when you’re used to it,” said the other. “I’ve had lots of rows with my father, and he’s paid up once or twice. But, hang it all, one must have some excitement, you know.”

Though Harry didn’t yet quite agree with his friend’s utter indifference to principle of any kind, he couldn’t help laughing at the off-hand ease with which he delivered the sentiment. It is not to men like Egerton, who have all the will but not the power to

treat their creditors fairly, that the aphorism, "As long as a young man does not pay his debts he will look upon all men as rogues," is to be applied, but rather to the Skindleeses of young mankind.

Comparing notes on the subject of unruly creditors lasted for some minutes, and then Egerton asked—"Did you know Rivers before?"

"Just to nod to. I don't much care about him; he's one of your gay deceivers."

"Wasn't he in the Blues?"

"Yes; he was the man who had that row about Mrs. What's-her-name—you remember—three or four years ago."

"I do remember something about it. What does he do now?"

"Oh! I don't know—loafs about, and tries to get into more rows. Didn't you hear about his ——" but here the conversation lapsed into scandal, too delightfully wicked to be allowed into these confoundedly moral pages.

Newspapers and other luxuries off shore appeared alongside shortly after, with another friend or two, whom Manners had

brought off to dine. And for yet another night they remained anchored off Cowes.

A fresh breeze and a fair tide next morning bore them rapidly down the Solent, on their way to Cherbourg. Right merrily they tore along through the smooth water, past Yarmouth's mimic castle, past nestling villas where sea-worn admirals fill up the measure of their years; past Alum Bay, with its rainbow-hues of trickling sand; past the Needles rock upon the swirling tide, and out into the open sea. The breeze freshens as the land recedes, and by luncheon-time they are bowling along with topmasts housed and a reef in the mainsail.

"Well, that's an animal that's fearfully and wonderfully made, if you like," said Manners, as he tried ineffectually to dissect a razor-breasted fowl, which had evidently not thriven upon Cowes food. "You may take your oath," he added, laughing, "that that bird was never caught with chaff!"

"Don't part freely, eh, Skindles?" laughed Rivers; "like other old birds we know!"

"There'll be the devil to pay here pre-

sently," cried Harry at this moment, as his plate made a feint of hopping on to his knee, at the instigation of a heavier sea than usual. "There's something wrong with this con-founded old table, Tom ; it don't half swing."

And there was no doubt that it did not half swing. If there had been, ocular demonstration of the fact was afforded the very next minute. For the noble ship again lurched over more than before ; the various bottles on the table inclined gracefully towards Harry's side, and with the most perfect deliberation fell down before him, put their heads over the side, and discharged their contents into his plate and over his knees. It was cruel of the others to go into such shouts of laughter, for there undoubtedly was a hitch somewhere. That table was usually a well-behaved swinging table, accommodating itself to circumstances with a most precise and admirable gravity, not given to practical joking or other demonstrations of a like disorderly nature, and in every respect a model to swinging tables. But on the present occasion, "alas ! what a

falling off was there." This hitherto unimpeachable article of furniture had (owing to neglect probably on the part of the steward) been suffered to become what is vulgarly termed "screwed," or, as it is more commonly expressed, "tight." And the consequences of this unseemly condition of what he had hitherto taken to be a well-conducted and perfectly trustworthy fixture, Egerton is now deploring, as he mops a pair of saturated trousers amid shrieks of unquenchable laughter from his friends.

The table having been persuaded to resume its normal function of a swinging table, luncheon came to an end without further accident. And by the time they arrived again on deck, the captain had made up his mind that they were going to have a gale of wind. It had gone round to the sou'west. And this captain, who was a cautious as well as a caustic man, was for putting back before they got into the middle of the Channel.

This proposition, however, was summarily negatived by the owner of the vessel, who

knew his man, and liked the excitement of a gale. He was warmly seconded, too, by Egerton, who thought that the captain, in going over the compass with him the day before, had dwelt somewhat unnecessarily upon lubber's point.

There was no objection, however, Tom said, to having another reef taken in if he liked; and accordingly Skindles, who had taken the tiller, was directed to bring her up in the wind for that purpose. And this he did so effectually that every one on deck was thoroughly drenched.

Sou'westers and waterproof garments now came into requisition—some of the party, however, preferring to sail under bare polls, letting the wind play through their dishevelled hair, as they hung on by the rigging and watched the water seething alongside.

The wind had now got well round to the sou'west, and they made but little progress. The captain again suggested putting back. Prospect of thick weather—might get out of their reckoning—"didn't know

nothin' at all about anythin', that like, in that 'ere kind of weather."

But they still kept on. And the plunging motion soon began to tell upon the inner man, and brought even the old salts, as they considered themselves, back to their London appetite at dinner-time.

There was just enough wind to make it exciting—too much, the captain thought, to be either safe or pleasant; and they remained upon deck till darkness set in, enjoying the whistling of the gale, and the rushing of the waves, and the dashing of the spray, as she pitched and rolled and dipped her bowsprit into the middle of opposing seas.

So they continued on into the night, getting snatches of sleep at intervals, till awakened by some more than usual commotion overhead. The soda-water in one locker clinking a treble to the bottled Bass in another, the rigging doing Bones, and the entertainment being varied occasionally by a concerted *roulade* from the entire company, as boots and brushes, and all the fur-

niture which had slipped from its moorings, went spinning across the cabins—up and down, back again, change across—through all the intricacies of a most spirited movement, enjoying themselves thoroughly, and full of the most mercurial life at the attainment of such unwonted freedom. This little game of pitch-and-toss was still further enlivened in the night by the giving way of some of the tackle; and the scurrying of feet overhead, and the banging of blocks, and the rattling of rigging, and the flapping of sails sounded as though Pandemonium might have been let loose upon deck, and the devils were playing at high cockalorum in hobnails over their heads!

Sleepy countenances arrived on deck in dishabille to find that no great harm had been done; and when they emerged again in the early morning, they found that the wind had gone round to the nor'west, the captain had turned in for an hour's sleep, and there was a prospect of their reaching the French coast that afternoon. At present, like the Spanish Armada, it was not

to be seen, because it was not yet in sight.

Before evening they were at anchor, in the midst of various other yachts, in Cherbourg harbour. But we have no time to follow their proceedings at that place. A sniff of the Bay of Biscay, and back again to the villa'd hills of Torquay; a cricket-match there on that pretty ground, with its rustic pavilion; and then round the coast, *en route* for the west of Scotland.

That sunny weather was rather made for toying with Amaryllis in the shade than for yachting. Light head-winds and a clear sky become monotonous on board a yacht, where the days are so long, where you require so little sleep in that fresh, bracing air, and where the holy-stoning of the deck, like a mercenary marriage (as the author of "Eothen" says), is so conducive to early rising. The delicious plunge over the side, the light dressing, and tremendous breakfast are well over by ten o'clock. Then you dangle a line over the stern in the hope of attracting some foolish fish which has got

out of its depth, and the sails flap backwards and forwards monotonously as the vessel plays at gybing; or you lazily shoot at the lazy gull as he glides dippingly by, looking out languidly at intervals along the wide waste of glittering water, in the hope of seeing a ruffle which may herald a coming breeze. And joy! there it is astern, coming up hand over hand. The sails fill—you begin to move—quicker, quicker! and now you are cutting through the water at a most exhilarating pace. The cabin gives up its occupants. Your spirits rise, and you tie an old black bottle astern, and go into fits of laughter at its curious antics as it goes bobbing around, dipping and curveting and prancing about in the most comical manner imaginable, and defying every effort of your saloon pistols to put an end to its gambols.

The breeze goes on till evening, and you anchor for the night in a pretty bay—land to stretch your legs and inspect the country, before coming back to dine off the fresh fish which the sailors have caught in your absence—not to mention the cool claret-cup

which has been iced at the bottom of the sea.

Then the after-dinner cigar, lounging in the soft air against the boom, or reposing luxuriously upon cushions and rugs upon the deck, where all has been made snug for the night, and the sailors are spinning yarns over their pipes in the forecastle. And then when twilight merges into night, and the stars creep out, and gem the vault above with twinkling mysteries, when the heavy dew begins to damp the air, and silence broods upon the wave, you turn in to the sound refreshing sleep which is bred of good digestion,—emerging upon deck the following morning to enjoy the early stillness of the day, the freshness of the air, and the bright morning sun, which is flooding with its clear light the green fields and wooded hills around the bay, which seem so doubly fresh and green and cool at this early hour.

This is the sort of life from which Harry found it very hard to tear himself away. But it was already late in August before

they arrived off Anglesea. Reluctantly, therefore, he bade farewell to his late companions, and exchanged the trim neatness of the yacht for the oily smell of the Kingstown mail steamer—found his route to Galway, and arrived at Castle Greville on the following day.

CHAPTER IX.

CASTLE GREVILLE was a very fair specimen of the Irish house, or castle, as they delight to call themselves, which go by the name of Castle Rackrents, and of which Galway boasts not a few. Greville liked that it should be so. It smacked of the good old Irish customs. And being a thorough Irishman in attachment to everything connected with his country, a very Moore in his patriotism, he never was so happy as during the three months of the autumn when he came down here to reside in this tumble-down old place, amongst his mountain tenantry. The unsophisticated attachment of the mountaineers, associated with the picturesque melancholy of decaying battlements and crumbling walls, would diffuse upon his life a dim reflection of a half-regretted past,—a past

of feudal loyalty and generous devotion, of open-handed hospitality, freedom, and enjoyment,—which he almost wished could come again. One corner of the house was devoted to furniture, and was comfortable enough ; though Harry used to say that the rats rode steeple-chases over his boots in the night, and the wind howled dismally and chill down the long stone passages, whistling under the bed-room doors and shrieking through the gaping window-sashes.

This was not the house where each guest, on retiring for the night, was provided with a second candle and a hunting whip, to keep off the rats,—the second candle to be lighted when the first expired, and when this was done, the whip to be cracked at intervals during the night. But it was a very similar establishment, and roosting birds and bats presented to the owner a yearly testimonial of displaced mortar and rubbish, in consideration of the high state of comfort and ventilation in which the gaps and chinks in the walls were kept for their accommodation.

The beauty of the site, however, made ample amends for the possible discomfort of dilapidation.

From the slope of a wooded hill the windows looked out upon a wild and broken valley, through which there foamed adown the rapids, flashing in the unwonted sunlight, a most undeniable salmon river. Mountains and fantastic shapes of hill stretched away into the blue distance, and heath-covered slopes rising immediately behind the house and woods of the demesne (as such place is called), induced pleasant thoughts of whirring grouse and galloping hare, cool mountain streams, and mid-day sandwiches.

Utterly retired from prim civilisation, it seemed the perfection of a wild retreat; and Egerton began to wonder, as his carman put on the usual spurt which had been kept for the approach, why people came so little to Ireland, when there was such charming scenery to be found there as well as in Scotland.

He had often heard enthusiastic accounts

of the place and people from Maud Greville, and had often promised to accompany her some day to verify them. But hitherto, in all his holidays and vacations and leisure time, his father had always made him his companion, and so he had never yet fulfilled his intentions. For Mr. Egerton, since his wife's death, had never visited Castle Greville, or, in fact, Ireland. So that Harry had all the charm of novelty to enhance the beauties of this mountain scenery, which, like Ireland itself, requires to be known to be appreciated.

There was a sentiment, too, about this place for him. It was here that his mother had been born, and lived, and died ;—that mother whom he had never seen,—whose picture only, in his father's study, made him feel how half the pleasure of his life had been buried in her grave.

It is many years now—some seven or eight-and-twenty—since his father, then a good-looking and extravagant younger son, used to come to visit his elder sister at Castle Greville—that sister who, now so much in

awe of him, used then to show her weakness and her fondness by helping him to pay his debts, or to extricate himself from some of the varied difficulties in which he was constantly involved. "The Castle" was then the principal residence of the family, and it was natural enough that Philip Egerton, during his frequent visits, should fall in love with Constance Greville, a delicate and tender creature, so full of soft beauty, grace, and kindness, that she was the idol of the warm-hearted peasantry for miles round.

The only obstacle to their marriage being removed by the death of Philip Egerton's mother, and his succession to her property, they were married, simply and quietly, in Ireland, Miss Greville's fortune being handed over to her husband without any settlement or interference of lawyer, and going towards paying Mr. Philip Egerton's many debts. There was, however, a kind of tacit understanding that it was to remain a charge upon his property for the benefit of any younger children there might be.

Two or three years after they had been

married, Harry's elder brother was born, and Mrs. Egerton, after hovering between life and death for many days, recovered at length, only to succumb at the birth of her second son, a year or two after.

Both children had been born at Castle Greville, and, as she had often wished, here, in her early, well-loved home, she died. But a day was her mother separated from her child, and they were laid side by side in one grave, in that shady corner under the drooping ashes and the sombre yews.

It was a sad day in all that country round. From village and from town, from roadside cabins, mountain glens, and far-off valleys, miles and miles away, there gathered a weeping crowd of young and old, rich and poor, every creed and every class. Little children, whose own cries were hushed by the sorrow which they saw and heard around, were dragged long distances by crippled mothers, or stooping age, to vent their passionate laments over the grave of their darling mistress and their dear young lady. Tears flowed from many an eye which

never knew a tear before ; and many a strong man's cheek was wet with heart-wrung grief, as the dark hearse dragged its mournful course along through the sorrowing crowds which lined the roads. How many an act of kindly sympathy was called up from the dreary past ; how many a word of compassionate interest was remembered, to give fresh poignancy to their grief, as the sad procession passed along and disappeared from view ! They clung about the hearse, they tore their hair, and beat their breasts, and filled the air with their frantic exclamations of agonised regret, pressing into the churchyard to get one glimpse even of the narrow coffin which held her loved remains. Catholic and Protestant—all differences of creed forgotten in their love for lost benevolence—pressed eagerly, passionately, round the vault, and a wild cry of despairing sorrow rent the pitying air as the studded box disappeared from their gaze in the gloom below, and that aching void at their hearts told them but too clearly that those kindly faces would be seen no more,—that those

eyes were dull, those lips were mute, and that henceforth the solace of kind words even might be wanting to alleviate their poverty.

The sun shone out upon that fair landscape of wood and hill and winding water; the birds carolled forth their joyous songs, and nature seemed to mock the grief which dwelt upon the land, as they returned wearily, drearily, to their sorrow-stricken homes.

But now, when they heard that Miss Greville's son was at the Castle, although long years had since elapsed, and a generation had arisen which knew her not, yet time had not effaced from the Irish heart the memory of former kindness; and those who had experienced her sympathy,—ay, and those who had only heard of it,—flocked down to bid him welcome. Many a present, too, of eggs or butter, did these simple, loyal-hearted creatures bring with them, in acknowledgment of their gratitude. 'Wasn't he her own son?' 'And oh! but it was herself that was a good friend to the poor,—heaven rest her soul!' 'Many was the

sore heart in that place when the Lord took her from them.'

Poor Harry was rather bewildered at the blessings that were showered upon him, and the baskets of eggs and fowls that were thrust into his hand. It seemed a robbery to take them; and yet, when he had hesitatingly wished to make some return for all these good things, the injured look with which his offer had been received made him blush for the insult which he had done to their feelings. He used, therefore, to carry his presents gravely into the house, and deliver them, with some amusement, to the tender mercy of the butler, who would smile grimly as he conducted a brood of young chickens to the poultry yard,—or unrolled a pound of butter from a coarse, clean wrapper, which Harry would return again to the donor with many expressions of thanks for its contents. And then these generous peasants would trudge home again in their bare feet, and bless his young face and his happy smile, which reminded them of his mother, and all the kind words she had said, and all the kind

things she had done, which had won their hearts more than five-and-twenty years ago.

Often an aged woman, who could scarcely hobble with the help of a crutch, would borrow a pair of shoes and a cloak, and come by stages from three or four miles off, getting a lift from a cart by the way, or a lodging at some roadside cabin for the night, just to get one sight of her dear young lady's boy before she died.

"And why wouldn't I?" she would say when Harry suggested that the journey was too far for her. "And why wouldn't I? Wouldn't I go twice the distance? Ay, and go on my knees the whole way, if I might only get a sight of her face again. I'll never live to see such another, your honour. Don't I mind well the last time that ever I saw her sweet young face, when she came to the house above, and gave me money to get back the poor wee cow that they took to the pound?" And the poor old creature's cheeks would stream with tears at the recollection, and she would try to dry them with the corner of her cloak as

she sobbed out, "Indeed I would, your honour, come that distance to see her own son, and be glad to do it."

And this is the peasantry whom ignorant or prejudiced persons, who know nothing of their good qualities, presume to brand with every ignoble and degraded feeling. Persons who, many of them, may have actually spent a whole fortnight among the people,—or rather, in the country. What experience can they have had of the depth and warmth of affection which underlies the Irish nature,—the loyal devotion which they show to the old races of the country,—the ardent gratitude which they cherish for kindness received,—or that open generosity which is only cramped by poverty? What do they know of the impulsive attachment to family, home, and country, which, beginning from the focus of their own hearths, widens out in ever-increasing circles till it embraces in its broad grasp the whole of their beloved island, for which, as for their landlords, they would die if necessary, rather than it or they should be insulted or injured?

Pity it is that noble qualities such as these should be misdirected or destroyed by the evil counsels of interested incendiaries, or the oppression of harsh and inconsiderate proprietors.

Among this latter class Spencer Greville certainly did not rank. When was ever complaint addressed to his careless ear? When did a poor man from his estate turn away from his presence in despair or disappointment? Even if he was unable to do as they wished, yet his refusal was so softened by the kindness of his words and the interest of his manner, that the granting of the request alone would have sent the petitioner away more grateful than he was. No business of pleasure interfered between himself and his tenants. He was always ready to stop and listen, make suggestions, or provide substantial assistance. And yet, with all his kindness and consideration, he was consistent, just, and stern, if occasion required. A man who tried to take advantage of his easy good-nature found no sympathy amongst his neighbours, not one of whom but had the

recollection of some kindly act, or some compassionate word, to endear them to their landlord, whose very kindness was thus the protection of his interest. Did a cabin require new thatching, or a cow-shed new roofing? Greville would take as much interest in it as if it was his own—would tell the steward to let them have the requisite timber, and, if they were very poor, would send his own carpenter to help. There was not a little holding or a farm that he had not gone over himself to see that it was not too highly rented,—not an item in the sum of their daily existence which he had not considered.

And though anxious to improve their condition, and make them more comfortable in every way, he never imposed his theories of comfort upon them. He never said to a woman, You *must* be clean and tidy—and uncomfortable. It was for their comfort, and not for his own, that he tried to induce them to prefer cleanliness to dirt; and if they could not be made to see that it was preferable, then it was better, he

thought, to let them be happy in their own way than miserable in his. Rooms were never swept and garnished at his approach, only to relapse into their normal confusion at his departure. And the consideration which he showed for the feelings and prejudices of the people won for him a far larger share of affection than those proprietors can boast whose estates are said to be in such first-rate order,—cottages so clean, gardens so tidy, furniture so white,—very much of which is the result of fear, which sacrifices the comfort of the people to the idea of the landlord. Try by all means to lead them to more civilised habits, but don't force your own notions upon them. No landlord can ever be a good landlord without thoroughly entering into, and sympathising with, the feelings and interests of the poorer class of people who form his tenants. Probably many are deficient in imagination, and cannot see a position from any point of view but their own,—cannot conceive that any expression may have another meaning than the one which they attach to

it themselves. But they ought to cultivate their imagination, and accustom themselves to enter into poor people's hearts, and look upon what they themselves say or do through the medium of those other eyes, which see so differently from their own. And they would often find, if they did so, that what appears consistent justice to the landlord is looked upon by the poor tenant as mere severity or unfeeling harshness. Others may have the requisite quality of imagination, but are without the natural kindness of heart which would prompt them to act differently; or they think that poor people have no sensibility, that they don't require to be treated with the tact which is necessary in what is called "society." Such men may have the name and appearance of polished gentlemen, but they can't pretend to the true spirit of the gentleman, whose good manners are founded upon consideration for the feelings of others. Expediency, interest, fear, servility, or some such other influence it is which quickens their sympathy, or rather, furbishes up their tact, and leads

them to avoid giving offence. And what is tact but the practical application of sympathy? Tact presupposes sympathy. Imagination points out, by a kind of instinct, the existence of certain feelings in others, under certain circumstances. Sympathy appreciates them, and, subject to some external agency, whether of kindness, or consideration, or delicacy, or more ignoble promptings, fashions our conduct so as not to wound them. But where the true foundation of tact does not exist, we shall always find a man giving offence to his inferiors by a contemptuous or imperious manner, which, among his equals or superiors, expediency, or a regard for his character, would induce him to avoid. For among his dependants he sees no necessity to guard against giving offence, even if he does look upon them otherwise than as mere puppets of his pleasure. It never occurs to him how much attachment and good-will may be lost by a disregard of their sensibility, and how much affection may be gained by a kind and considerate bearing.

But to those who do look upon their dependants in the light of fellow-men, endowed with the same feelings as themselves, what position can be imagined productive of more real enjoyment than that of a landlord living in the midst of his tenantry, doing good all round him, relieving their distresses, and providing for their wants—receiving in return their respect and attachment, to give an additional impetus to the inward satisfaction which true beneficence produces; having, too, the gratification of feeling that his life is being one of usefulness, that his part in the world is being duly fulfilled, and that hundreds are paving for him with their blessings a road to heaven?

Many men, under the influence of an impulsive humanity, are compelled to wander abroad to seek some field for their philanthropy where they have no special interest to attract them. But with the owner of an estate there is an ever-present fund of interest and scope for employment ready prepared for him, in the care of the little knot of human beings committed to his especial charge. He need not

have that comprehensive grasp of sympathy, that enthusiasm of humanity, which pervades some men with a love for every individual member of their kind. But he may well be able to take in the compass of his own estate, and feel that interest in the happiness and comfort of each of his tenants which every landlord ought to feel. He is the focus towards which all the rays of their interest and attachment concentrate, and he lives but in the comfort of his people—whose affection and kindly feeling towards him, combined with the nearer ties of family and home, might be the beginning and the end, the elements and the whole of his satisfied existence.

When the pleasures of resident proprietorship are so attractive, it is difficult to conceive how men can reconcile to their hearts or their consciences that systematic disregard of their duties as landlords which has been so fatal an element in the discord which has so long defaced the Irishman's unfortunate country. Do they suppose that they will not have to answer at some future day for the neglect of

the opportunities of doing good, which lay ever before them waiting to be utilised? Do they not consider that it is at their door that will be laid the growth of bad feelings, and the dying out of good ones, which their presence and encouragement were needed to foster and cherish?—that it is the want of the tranquillising influence of their immediate intercourse which has caused sedition and disloyalty to spring up upon their properties?—that it is to the rapacity and greediness which drew from the land its last penny, and spent not a farthing in return, that the prevailing hostility and discontent are mainly due?—and that it is indirectly through their agency that the naturally fine qualities of their tenantry have been perverted, and their worst ones inflamed?

If every landlord throughout Ireland had been a Spencer Greville, we should never have heard of successive rebellions rising up from the ashes of former wrongs. Under the kindly training of such beneficent hands, even the memory of the injury which had been done, in the trampling under foot of

their religion, might have died out, instead of rankling, as it has done, in every breast, and breaking forth at times, as fresh causes for discontent were provided by the hard-heartedness of landlords whom they had never seen. Some may not have it in their power to provide substantial assistance wherever it may be needed ; they cannot, perhaps, afford to remit the hardly-collected rent. But there are other ways of increasing the well-being of a tenantry. Kindly tones and compassionate sympathy have often far more soothing effects than mere almsgiving. And a tender and considerate interest in the daily life and occupation of each will often sow the seeds of an affectionate gratitude, from which there will bud and blossom such an evergreen loyalty and attachment as the warm-hearted peasantry of Ireland alone are capable of feeling.

CHAPTER X.

To return from a very lengthy digression.

Mr. Egerton, after his wife's funeral, went abroad with his family for some months, and joined his younger sister, Lady Belvedere, in Italy, where she had been left by her lord, recovering from the birth of her first and only child.

For many years after Mrs. Egerton's death, Castle Greville remained uninhabited; Spencer's father finding it impossible to live in a place where the associations were so painful, and where he was continually being reminded of this double funeral; and, until his eldest son married, the place had been allowed almost to go to ruin. At his father's death, some years since, Spencer had returned to live there for two or three months every year; and Mrs. Greville was glad

enough to break off her connection with Ireland, and retire with Maud, then a little girl of eleven years old, to the charge of her brother's establishment. Greville had, three or four years before, been left a widower, with a little Walter and a little Constance, now five and six years old respectively, who always accompanied him to Castle Greville, as the spoilt companions of a too-indulgent father. Very few lessons they did when they got into the mountains. They were the very life of the old place, and the delightful torment of every gardener and man about the house. What romps, too, they used to have with good-natured cousin Harry! how they used to chase him round the chairs and under the tables, and climb over him, and ruffle his hair—making the echoing walls ring with their merry laughter the while! Up the stairs, along the stone passages, in and out of the empty bed-rooms, what famous games of hide-and-seek those were, and what peals of excited merriment would start from dark corners and capacious cupboards as the lurking occupant was de-

tected in his hiding-place ! The old house hardly knew itself on a wet day, when outdoor sports were not practicable, and Harry was drawn into a game of play with these noisy little monsters ; and even papa sometimes would join them, and be as full of fun and noise and spirits as the best of them, to the no small astonishment of one or two staid old men who were in the house at the time.

I can't fancy Colonel Montgomery, with his stiff collar and frill, ever being crawled over by children. He was like a yard of starch, a regular man of the old school, who came down to dinner in a curious mechanism of shirt-front and waistcoat, the mysteries of which Harry's eye had never been able to solve. His coat-collar was as high as his head, and his contempt for everything new, or what belonged to the present day, was only equalled by the systematic regularity with which he contradicted everything you said. If the sun was shining brilliantly, and you hazarded the remark that it was a beautiful day, he would tell

you there was rain in that sky. If it was pouring with rain, and you said it was wet, he would reply that, for that country, it was really remarkably fine weather—that country, where some one has said that the prevalent weather is rain, with showers between. Get Colonel Montgomery into an argument, and he was obstinate as any pig in defence of his opinion, until he had brought you round to his view of the point, when he would become equally obstinate in arguing that his original opinion, as coincided in by you, could not hold water for an instant.

The morning after Harry's arrival, the day before the 20th, they strolled out—a party of men—to look at the farm. Greville always had considerable farming operations going on, although he lived so little in the place; but he very properly considered that some employment was required for the poorer tenants, and desired, at the same time, to spend among them a fair share of the money which he drew from this portion of his property.

"That's a good rick of hay, Colonel," he said, as they stood in the haggard smoking their pipes.

"Small enough, I say," replied Colonel Montgomery, who had a curious habit of tacking on "I say" to almost every sentence—a peculiarity which, in moments of excitement, became irresistibly ludicrous.

"Not too well saved, either," he added.

"Well, I don't know," rejoined Greville, slightly smiling; "I don't think there's much fault to find with that, is there?" pulling out a handful.

"Fusty, I say, fusty,—a little fusty. If you will try these new-fangled notions of making hay, what can you expect, I say,—I say, what can you expect? Stick to the old way, is my plan,—the old way, sir, the old way!"

"I'm fairly satisfied with this trial anyhow," said Greville. "I don't notice any fusty smell; and it's a great saving if you have fine weather, getting it in at once, instead of leaving it out so long to the rain. Think of the waste there is in every cock."

“May do in England ;—doesn’t suit the grass of this country ;—too moist,—too moist,—different kind of grass altogether. No, no ; no experiments for me. I don’t like your English fashions. But, God bless me ! now that we’ve got these confounded railways ‘overrunning the country, it’s impossible to say what we shall do next.”

“You’re not much troubled with railways up in your part of Ulster, Colonel, I think,” said Sir Henry Blake, a Galway neighbour of Greville’s, who was well acquainted with the other’s old-fashioned prejudices.

“Thank God, they haven’t got as far as me yet !” replied the Colonel. “But I don’t expect to live in peace and quiet much longer. They’re trying to get a line under my very nose, sir,—under my own door, and had the impudence,—the impudence, I say,—to ask me to help ’em ! What do they want railways for ? Ruin the country. Let them carry their butter to market in carts, as their fathers did. Gad, sir, you can’t travel nowadays without

risking your neck in one of these tearing, upsetting, bone-smashing machines. Mark my words, they'll have to come back to the old stage-coach and posting. Safest, much the safest, I say, and quickest in the end." Colonel Montgomery brought his stick down with a decisive movement upon the ground as he finished, and turned to find fault with the cattle feeding on the rich after-grass where the party now stood.

Greville tried ineffectually to persuade him that Devons thrive upon that kind of pasture, but the Colonel would hear of nothing but the old Irish "mountainy" animal for poor lands. "Nothing like the old Kerry, I say,—nothing like the old Kerry."

Nothing would please him. They stopped to look at a promising field of turnips. The merits of superphosphate as a manure came under discussion. The Colonel gave a grunt of dissatisfaction—admitted that his steward had persuaded him to try it—great risk—foolish of him to allow it; but the fellow was lucky, the season was favourable, and his crop therefore good. "Dangerous ex-

periment, though,—doesn't do to play tricks with your land."

Egerton was not much of a farmer, and discussions upon the relative merits of different breeds of cattle and turnips had, therefore, very little interest for him. So he walked on with another young member of the party, who knew as much about it, perhaps, as he did, but by a quiet assumption of knowledge, implied that he knew a great deal more.

Arthur Lyons was a cousin of Greville's ; and a fastidious person might have said that Arthur Lyons was a conceited young gentleman. Such person would not, perhaps, have been very far out in his estimate. The circumstances of Lyons' position would certainly have warranted such a prejudication. For he held some post about the viceregal court, and from his connection with "the Castle," was in the habit of being made very much of in Dublin society, where good-looking young men of good family are rare.

It might be made an additional argument

for doing away with the mockeries of a sham court, which is kept up for the benefit of the Dublin tradesmen,—that it unfits for general society the few respectable young men who flit about its shadowy state, owing to the airs which their glittering position causes them to assume. It seems odd that people who pretend to be consistent, and rave against exceptional legislation for Ireland, should yet be contented to acquiesce in exceptional government, and the exceptional absence of royalty from this part of the United Kingdom. By the time these pages are in print, no doubt some sweeping theorist may have devised a plan by which the Crown, as sole proprietor, may be induced to visit occasionally its extensive estates in this part of its territory. If he has so far condescended to enter upon the region of practical common sense, it is sincerely to be hoped that so desirable a scheme may not be consigned to the same limbo to which other wild theories respecting Ireland have been so deservedly condemned.

After luncheon, Harry committed his

fishing paraphernalia to the care of a water-keeper who was in attendance, and started for the river.

Barney was soon at his ease, and deep in accounts of the number of fine fish which had been taken out of the river that season, and eloquent upon the vast proportions of those which he had seen "leppin'" that very day. "Begob, your honour," he said, alluding to the latest born of his imagination, "I was thinkin' that maybe it was a dog that was jumpin' into the water. It took a lep out of me that 'd surprise you to see. It was a shockin' big salmon, Master Henry." Barney thought it was the biggest fish that ever he saw, barrin' one that took him in the spring; and the bare recollection of that monster caused him to apostrophise a sacred name with the most fervent blasphemy. He proceeded to say that on this occasion he had not joined to fish more than it might be a couple of minutes, "when he riz at me dreadful wicked. Man dear, but it was a great fish; and divil mend him, but he didn't like the prick of the hook. Well,

your honour, I was in the greatest jeopardy with that salmon that ever I was in during the whole course of my life. Didn't he keep on with his divilment for an hour and more? And damn the fin above the water ever he showed—not a show—but kep' me runnin' up and down, up and down, till I'd like to be beat off for the want of breath. An' af that wouldn't satisfy him, what 'd he do but take round the bit of an island there below, and me up to my neck in the wather after him. Sure I wasn't going to lave him, your honour, after the tramp that he'd led me. Well, that didn't satisfy him neither, and away goes my jintleman down stream again, as if the divil himself was afther him, and me swimmin' and rouling him up at the same time. And to think that afther runnin' me that coorse, your honour, he'd make off with him without so much as a 'God save you,' or a sight of his face."

"But he did, then," continued Barney, in melancholy tones, "and took from me the best fly that was in the whole book. And divil a flitter of the casting-line at all

he left with me. And indeed it's no lie I'm tellin' your honour."

Barney's piscatorial reminiscences and Harry's laughter were at this moment cut short by the appearance of a mob-cap and a pair of bare arms at the door of a cottage by the road-side. The arms were thrown up in the air with a most extravagant demonstration of delight, and a voice from beneath the cap exclaimed,—

"Now glory be to God this day, but your honour's a hundred welcomes, Master Henry!"

Harry shook the wrinkled paw which was held out to him, and professed great satisfaction at having renewed his acquaintance with so old a friend. And she continued:—

"Maybe your honour wouldn't remember Molly Tom that often held you in these arms, and you a small wee little thing? Indeed it's long enough since *that* day."

Harry had a perfect recollection of being held in those same arms—a feat of memory which gave all the satisfaction which it was intended to produce; and Molly Tom con-

tinued. (By the way, she was called by this rather singular double Christian name because her husband was always known as Tom the Ploughman, and half the neighbourhood didn't know what his surname was.) However, she went on to say that it was a great thing to see him grown such a fine gentleman, and appealed to Barney whether it was not a subject for much thankfulness to see him looking so powerful stout.

"Indeed it is, then," replied he of the river, tacking on the usual benediction.

Harry didn't find out till he had been a little longer in the country that to be powerful stout meant to be in great health, and thought it rather an equivocal compliment at the time. But Molly went on to inquire after Master Egerton; it was long indeed since she set eyes on *his* honour, though it was her own daughter, the poor cratur, that had been his nurse. And he had always been a kind of a delicate child.

Harry believed him to be well; and making a shot, inquired after the old woman's husband.

“Well, indeed, Master Henry, he’s donny enough,” was the doleful reply. “He got a deal of brashes lately, savin’ your honour’s presence, and I’m afeard th’ ould man’s for death. He was always a big slave, your honour, and he was greatly thronged with work at Christmas last—the steward allowing him for to plough, and him scarce able to walk.” And Molly entered into a lengthy history of her domestic troubles for the last few months—how her husband had been found nearly drowned one night in the “shough,” having fainted by the way—how they had been married for more than forty years—what a boy he had been in his youth—how she had married him in spite of her relations, who had disowned her in consequence, and in the face of the custom of the country,—where, notwithstanding the romantic nature of the Irish peasant, love matches are comparatively rare: girls without a fortune—in the shape of a cow, or a bit of land, or a few sovereigns of money—say that the boys won’t look at them.

Molly brought her narrative to a close by

wondering what would become of her when Tom was gone; it was he that was always the good head to her. She supposed that she'd be to go to the poor-house then. All which speculation had not altogether the same interest for Harry as for herself. But she wound up eventually by asking if his honour would go in and see the old man. "It's right glad he'd be to get a sight of him."

Harry of course acquiesced, and Barney improved the interval by smoking the pipe of contemplation on an inverted creel. A further acquaintance with the Irish native showed their English visitor that the slightest break in any occupation in which they might be engaged was always deemed a most sufficient excuse for turning their attention again to the more important consideration of the seductive pigtail.

"I'm afeard it's but a poor place for the like of *your* honour to come to," the old woman said, as she piloted Harry through the outer room of the cabin, which was reception-room, kitchen, and sitting-room all in one. A turf fire was burning on

the floor, with a black pot in its neighbourhood, and a heap of potatoes hard by. One wooden chair with a half-knit stocking stood in the corner; and over it there hung from the rafters a weird-looking object, which proved, on inquiry, to be a salted hare; an old pig was taking her afternoon siesta behind the door; a suspicious-looking cur-dog was sleeping off his luncheon of potato skins in another corner; and an elderly hen was picking a bone with another female bird in the very precincts of the sick-room.

These ordinary visitors having been unceremoniously ejected, Molly explained to her husband that Master Henry Egerton, that he'd mind long while ago, had come to see him.

Of course he remembered him. Anything connected with his mother, and the old associations of her kindly nature as she had moved amongst them, touched anew the chord of grateful memory which had not been broken by long disuse. And the old man's eye lighted up with pleasure as Harry approached the wooden bed, with its patch-

work quilt, whereon the emaciated, night-capped form was lying.

"It's a blessed sight this day to see your honour," he exclaimed, feebly enough, and holding out his hand for Harry to shake. "How 's Lady Greville, and Miss Maud? That's a fine young lady indeed."

Both man and wife were agreed upon this point, but somehow Mrs. Greville did not come in for that share of praise which a person who took such an interest in the place and people might reasonably have expected.

Family matters having been arranged, Harry proceeded to make inquiries after the old man's personal feelings.

"Ah, your honour, I'm ailin' this good while; there isn't a bit of flesh left on me," he replied, stretching out a skeleton hand and wrist for his visitor's compassion.

"Bad scran to ye, get out of that now," cries Molly, as a wily fowl, which had sneaked in behind her, flies up and perches on the end of the bed. Such a cackling and fluttering of wings, and brandishing of

sticks ensues, that Harry's interest, in spite of him, wanders from the sick-bed to speculate whether the fowl would hold her own or not. Molly's energy, however, eventually triumphs, and her husband then calls her to order for not having brought a chair for Harry to sit down.

"Amn't I bringin' one this minute?" she answers, presenting it, wiped with a cloth, for his accommodation.

The old man then continued to enlist his sympathy for his ailments, and went on in the querulous tones of sickness and old age—"I'm thinkin' I'll not be here much longer, Master Henry. It's always waker I'm gettin'—waker every day. And the bit of food I can touch doesn't make me the better to signify. And I'm thinkin'," he continued, with a simple pathos of regret, "I'm thinkin' always who'll be to plough them far bottoms for the master when I'm gone, your honour. He'll never get one that'll make as good a hand of them as myself." His voice faltered a little, and the old eyes were moistened with natural

tears, as the thought came home to him that he should turn a plough no more. "I mind well the first time ever I put a plough into that land, it had like to break a man's heart, Master Henry ; every minute, a stick, or a stone, or a something catchin' agen the plough. And *your* honour knows that there isn't a better bit of land now in the place."

This was said with such a conscious pride that Harry never dreamt of disputing it, though, from his short acquaintance with the land, he could hardly be expected to have that intimate knowledge of its merits with which he was credited.

"Oh ! you'll be all right again," he said, "by the time it wants ploughing."

Tom answered despondingly, "I'll not be leaving this bed again, your honour, till I'm carried from it. The master'll be to look out for another ploughman. I doubt but what the ould man's well-nigh had his spell."

Molly, who stands by Harry looking on, raises her petticoat to her eyes—"Ah !

don't be saying it, man. What'll I do, Master Henry, if the Lord takes him from me?"

Any further anticipations of a dreadful future, in which Molly might have proposed to indulge, were cut short by the appearance of an inquisitive goose, which, hearing unusual voices within, had just stepped across from the dung-heap to see whether there might be any supplementary food going on. She was now putting her head round the corner of the door in such an intensely comical manner that Harry, who a moment ago had been almost inclined to tears, now felt it difficult to restrain his laughter.

With the intention of pursuing her investigations yet further, the bird had already entered the room, and by executing a well-planned flank movement in the direction of the window, had placed Molly between herself and the door, before the latter had found out that she had been made the victim of a surprise. When she did awake to a knowledge of the position, and the easy assurance with which the mud-bedabbled

bird was stalking about the room, the petticoat was dropped at once, and the stick again came into play. But having been so far successful, our bird had no intention of being summarily ejected again, and took up an intrenched position underneath the bed, defying the stick which was exploring her ground so energetically. The pig, too, makes a diversion in her favour by suddenly entering the unobstructed door, canters round the room, and before the stick is well up to him, is grunting among the potatoes again outside.

Apologising for the misbehaviour of her family, Molly allows the bird to keep her position for the present, and returns to her lament over her departing husband.

“Never fear,” says Tom, “but what the master’ll never see you starve, Molly. It’s five-and-forty years come Martinmas, your honour,” turning to Harry, “since I came into this place, and Mr. Greville was always a kind master to me—the Lord preserve him in health—and his father before him, and Miss Constance—that’s your mother,

heaven rest her soul—she was the best friend ever we had !”

“Indeed she was !” chimed in the other ;
“none better.”

Harry listened for a few moments longer to the praises of his mother and her family ; heard that his “dada” was a great gentleman entirely, who had ‘scharred’ Molly’s life out on St. John’s Eve one time, and then rose to go, hoping to see Tom about again shortly, and pressing some silver into his wife’s hand as he went out, telling her to get something her husband might fancy to eat.

“Indeed, then, he wants for nothing,” she said ; “the master’s very good to him—may God Almighty prosper him—and bid me get anything he’d want from the house.”

Bouquets of blessing were showered down upon him as he emerged into the road, and the sound of his name apparently attracted the attention of a stooping, wrinkled old woman, who was passing at the moment, mumbling to herself as she sidled along with her eyes fixed upon the ground. She

looked up quickly, stopped, and shambled across to him, gazed at him wildly from out of her bleared eyes, and muttered in a husky, croaking voice, half to him and half to herself, "And that's his own brother."

"Whisht now, darling," she continued, approaching still closer, as if to take him into her confidence. "Is she still living? Tell me that. Is she living now, your honour?"

Her question was accompanied with an eager, terrified look, which contrasted so strangely with her wheedling manner, that Harry was a little startled.

"Is who living?" he asked.

"Ah! don't be minding her, your honour," interrupted Barney; "she's foolish this long time. Be off now, Biddy, and lave his honour alone."

"It's her own face,—I'd know it any place," said the old hag, looking wistfully at him, and disregarding Barney's injunction, "and he—he—" and she burst into a wild hysteric laugh, and slunk away, murmuring, "Ah! the poor young thing,—her

own face,—her own face,—the Lord be good to us all ;” and so hobbled away out of sight.

“That’s a curious old woman, Barney,” said Egerton as they resumed their way. “Is she mad ?”

“Well, indeed she is, your honour, or near hand it, any way.”

“Where does she come from ?”

“Sure isn’t she Molly Tom’s own daughter, for all she looks as old a woman as herself ?”

“But she wasn’t my brother’s nurse.”

“That’s what she was, then ; and didn’t she went away with yiz all after the mistress died, and travelled among them foreigners to take care of Master Egerton and your own honour ?”

Harry mused. He was thinking over the strange expressions she had used to himself.

“Has she been out of her mind long ?” he asked.

“She has this twenty years, and more,” said Barney. “Her husband was drowned above in the river a while after she come

back; and she never was right since. There's many in this town, your honour, 'ud go a mile round to save meetin' her. And divil a one 'ud pass her house at night. It's what they'd be so mortal frightened of, the howlin' and the screechin' she'd be makin'. Indeed, now, it's terrible to hear." And Barney himself didn't seem to be exempt from the superstitious awe with which the old woman was regarded.

They had arrived at the bank of the river by this time, and Harry proceeded to look over his fly-book, while his rod was being put together. This being done, he handed the book to Barney, who turned over the leaves with a critical eye, selecting one here and there, and turning over page after page contemptuously, with "No use on this water;" "Too bright for this day;" "Too large entirely;" or remarks of a similar nature, until he had selected a couple, which he proceeded to fasten into the cast.

He was prevailed upon, after some discussion, to forego what he called the double chance, and saying, with his mouth full of

gut, "Well, plase yourself; but if he wouldn't take to the one, maybe he'd look at the other," he handed over the rod and line complete.

Harry took up his position on a little promontory of grass, and commenced to fish, while Barney again produced the little black pipe, hung his gaff over his back, sat down, took a tin box out of one of the mysterious receptacles in which his outer covering abounded, and proceeded, with much deliberation, to cut up another quantum of anticipated enjoyment. A small steel apparatus and a bit of combustible rag furnish a light; and he puffs away in silence while he watches Harry casting, and mentally estimates his quality as a fisherman.

"You may quit it," he says, at last; "he's not at home."

And gathering himself up, he leads the way to the next pool, suggesting a wee cast across a slight rapid on the way.

The fly comes dodging across the stream, and is nearing the side again, when there's a sudden tug, and a thrilling whish, as the

line runs out for some distance, and then remains motionless for a second or two, then makes a dart up stream, and a good-sized grilse jumps a foot out of water at the end of it. Backwards and forwards—all over the place—with frantic jumps at intervals, and then he makes a bolt down stream.

“Give him line, give him line,” cries Barney, as Harry holds him up tight to prevent his going down into the next pool.

But the admonition came too late. As he spoke the rod swished back into an upright position, and the line came back, light and limp.

“Bedam, but he’s away,” Barney exclaims by way of confirmation to Harry’s expression of mortification. “Ye bore too hard upon him,” he said—“them grawl is very light in the mouth.”

However, Barney was very sanguine of getting stuck in another in the pool they were coming to.

“It’s the best hole in the river,” he said, —“good or bad. There was tearin’ fine fish leppin’ in it this very morning.”

“But how on earth is this to be fished?” asked Egerton, as they came up to the best hole in the river, which lay between steep rocks on either side.

“Well, it’s not too convenient, your honour,” was the reply.

But Barney had a place cut for his own feet in the rock, where he said some hand might be made of it, and after an injunction to take care and not fall into the water, Harry was left to manage it as best he could.

The pool was fished out. Those big fish were apparently not up to a fly at this time of day. And he was turning to see how he was to get back again, leaving his fly in the water. A slight jerk makes him look round again. The line was probably caught in the rock. He tries it. Fast in something. Must be a stone. But no—it moves.

“Begob, it’s a salmon,” cries Barney, eagerly, as the line moves gradually across the pool; and after a feeling strain, away he went like a good ’un down to the tail of the pool, over the rapids, and down the stream,

at a tearing pace, with a good sixty yards of line out, Harry climbing the rock as best he could, and reeling him up as he got down the other side.

After a race of a couple of hundred yards, in which Barney tails off behind, they come to a stand-still. And by the time the elderly legs of the keeper have arrived the line is motionless—fish has not yet shown himself, and appears to have no intention of doing so. Barney again sits down, and again lights his pipe. Egerton, after a time, gives him the rod to hold, and does the same. Half an hour passes in this way. Big stones are tried to no purpose, and at last he bethinks him of giving the end of the rod a jar. There's a movement—hurrah! away he goes again, up stream this time, backwards and forwards, as gay as ever, not half ready for killing, and it's a good three-quarters of an hour before he runs in under the bank.

Barney seizes the opportunity, gets the gaff well under him, and has him out on the bank flapping, jumping, gasping, bleeding.

Foul-hooked, of course. How, otherwise, could he have dallied with fate so long? What Barney called a "wicked houl't," as he cut out the hook, and told Harry that he had made good work with him.

The pocket weighing machine,—the bit of wood and string to tie him up with—Barney's comments—and so home again to dinner.

CHAPTER XI.

“HE’s a capital fellow, old Barney, isn’t he?” said Greville, as they were discussing the fish an hour or two after its capture.

“First-rate,” Egerton answered, laughing. “He’s the best liar I ever came across, I think.”

“Yes, he has a good story or two,” said Greville, smiling at the recollection of some of them. “He tells a very fine one about your father catching I don’t know how many fish, one afternoon—all over twenty pounds. He couldn’t kill them fast enough; they were coming and hooking themselves of their own accord; and when they were strung on a pole between the shoulders of Barney and his son, they were so big that their tails were trailing on the ground.

‘Begorra, your honour,’ he says, ‘that was a great day’s fishing.’”

“That same Barney is the greatest Ribbonman in the county, I’m told,” said Sir Henry Blake.

“I know he has the name of it,” rejoined Greville, “and his character wasn’t too good some years ago ; but since he took the pledge I haven’t heard anything against him.”

“That’s the reason, then, he refused whiskey when I offered it to him,” said Egerton, when it was explained to him what taking the pledge meant. “I thought it was rather odd.”

“He keeps it most religiously, I believe,” Greville said, “and that, I always think, says something for a man’s character. For it must require a great deal of moral courage for a fellow like that, who has been in the habit of getting drunk periodically, to give up spirits entirely till his seven years are over. They think a good deal more of an oath, when they have once taken it, than many Protestants do.”

“Ah,” exclaimed Colonel Montgomery,

with a grunt, "that's what makes their secret societies so dangerous, I say, dangerous;" and the head from which this oracular remark issued buried itself again in the circumambient neckcloth.

"That, and their fear of each other," said Sir Henry. "Not one of them would dare to 'let on,' as they say, about another of the crew."

"Have you much Ribbonism about here, Greville?" asked another of the party.

"Sir Henry will tell you that the place is a hotbed of Ribbonism, but it never comes under my notice. They don't molest me, and I'm not in much fear that they will."

Sir Henry Blake was very fierce against Ribbonmen; and it was only the other day, he said, that the scoundrels had sent him another threatening letter, ornamented with a coffin, and a drop of blood by way of signature.

Egerton was rather astonished to hear him talking about it as if it was a joke, and asked what he did with such letters when they arrived.

“Send them to the police, or put them into the fire, and think no more about them,” he replied.

But notwithstanding the indifference which he professed, it was only very lately that he had dispensed with the two policemen who, for several years, had been his regular attendants through the country. Even now he never went out without a revolver in his pocket, and was always home, if possible, before night.

Greville's property bordered on Sir Henry Blake's, and their tenants were all much the same class of small farmers. But Greville had never received anything in the shape of a threatening letter, or experienced any expressions but those of the utmost good-will from any tenant upon his estate.

Sir Henry, however, was a very different kind of landlord. In the first place, he liked to get thirteen pence for his shilling, if he could ; and this is a peculiarity never appreciated by the Irish native. Then, again, he was an essentially selfish landlord, who looked upon his tenants as mere figures

of wood and stone, who might be moved about at his pleasure, without being consulted in the least degree. He wanted to make an improvement, perhaps, and certain houses were in the way. The occupants, therefore, of those houses, had notices to quit, and were, or were not, provided with others elsewhere ; more probably, had their passages paid to America, and were expected to be thankful for that small mercy. All this would be done without one moment's consideration for the feelings of the many poor people immediately interested. It never would occur to him to think whether the gratification of his own private fancy was not paid for rather dearly by the inconvenience and pain which it would occasion to so many families. He never took into consideration the peculiar feeling of attachment which the Irish peasant entertains for the little piece of ground or cabin in which his early life has been passed, and with which all the love and interest of his ardent nature is bound up,—a love which still clings to him through long years of

absence in foreign lands, and which often brings him home again to die upon the little spot which has lived so brightly in his memory through storm and trouble, fair and foul, and all the changing circumstances of an alien life.

It is, of course, the duty of every landlord to consider the reasonable wishes of his tenants, and, while regarding what is due to himself, to endeavour to promote their happiness in every way, even merely looking upon them in the light of fellow-creatures. But in Ireland consideration is more particularly a duty, because there is so much more to consider. You know the people have this feeling towards the land, and you know that they are a sensitive race; that their passions, both good and bad, are easily roused, and very strong when roused. And yet, landlords like Sir Henry Blake deliberately and wantonly outrage their prejudices upon the point on which they feel most deeply; and, having stirred up their resentment and sense of injury, are then surprised that they should embrace the readiest means of revenge;

call them ungrateful scoundrels, thankless dogs; and say that, after all, they don't wonder at people not living upon their property in Ireland, with such a set of fellows to deal with. It was landlords of this kind who originated that protective system of murder, which is now, as landlords become more civilised, happily on the wane. Ribbon murders still occur in isolated districts; but Ireland in 1869 is very different from Ireland of 1848. There may be half-a-dozen counties where civilisation has not produced a power to discriminate between justice and injustice, and where the peasantry still think that the landlord's rule is one of selfish extortion as in former days. But it is just as unfair to argue from these exceptional localities a general condemnation of the condition of Ireland, as it would be to affirm that a hideous state of feeling prevails throughout England because cold-blooded and brutal murders are considered merely an interesting excitement at Sheffield. And therefore it strikes one as very poor patriotism for a gentleman to publish his

experiences of Ireland's darkest days, by way of enlightening the English public on the state of Ireland at the present time. Such a publication is only calculated to strengthen the erroneous impression which is already too deeply fixed in the minds of Englishmen, that it is impossible for landlords to live in Ireland. It was difficult at one time, because the people had had so little experience of kind treatment from their landlords that they didn't know what justice was, and looked upon the word landlord as a synonym for tyrant. But the relations between landlord and tenant are improving every year in Ireland, and will improve indefinitely, if landlords will only understand that considerate justice is now appreciated by their tenants. An Irish landlord may, perhaps, be required to exercise more self-denial—to conciliate, rather than to command. But he knows the kind of people with whom he has to deal, and will do wisely to cut his coat according to his cloth. All the world over, peculiar circumstances require peculiar treatment. If you know a

man to be bad-tempered, and touchy on some particular point, you are cautious about approaching what you know to be dangerous ground. But with some people it is not so. They think that he has no business to be ill-tempered, (ignoring the fact that he is), and come to loggerheads with such a man at once, because he fires up at some expression which any one else would have heard unmoved. These are the kind of men who cannot understand why Ireland should have different laws and different treatment from England; who cannot be made to see the absurdity in which their argument lands them, viz., that they are insisting that where the circumstances are perfectly different, the results ought to be entirely the same.

Sir Henry Blake would have found, as readily as Greville had found, that his tenants were perfectly willing to admit the privileges of the landlord, as long as he didn't try to ride roughshod over all their prejudices, and as long as he considered their feelings a little as well as his own.

But he didn't see it. They wanted to

get the land into their own hands; thought they had a right to have whatever they asked for; and that the landlord was to be dictated to just as they pleased. "But they find me a difficult customer to deal with," he said. "They set me at defiance. And we'll see which gets the best of it in the end."

"You want a few Orangemen down here," Colonel Montgomery broke in. "You'll never be secure, I say, never be secure without some protection of the kind."

"I should be very sorry to do anything of the sort, Colonel," said Greville. "I don't think that you've shown us in the north that the presence of the Orangemen tends to promote the peace of the country. I'm happy to say I haven't an Orangeman that I know of about the place."

"Happy, sir! Happy! happy! Why, I say, without Orangemen we landlords couldn't stay in the country. I say, I say, where should we be, I wonder, if it wasn't for the protection of the Orangemen—if it wasn't—if it wasn't for the Orangemen?"

The Protestants couldn't live in the place without this dependence upon each other."

Greville tried to interpose a remark, but the Colonel continued: "Why, I say, we should be swept away, swept away, sir, by Papists and railroads, if it wasn't for Orangemen!"

It didn't exactly appear how the question could be influenced by railroads; but Greville, replying to the other point, said, "I don't see why you should be swept away any more than I am. I have hardly a Protestant on the estate; and here I am, as happy as you please."

"Couldn't get on without 'em, I say," rejoined the Colonel. "Protestants couldn't live in the middle of a Roman Catholic district—couldn't live, I say, without this mutual dependence which they have as Orangemen." And the head again settled its way oracularly into its collar. "The thing's impossible, I say! Experience, I say, has shown us that it is out of the question."

"Why, you have had no experience during the last century and a half of how

it would be if there was no Orangeism ; and I'm convinced that there's nothing so injurious to peace and quiet as keeping up a wall for the Roman Catholics to run their heads against."

"A good thing for them, and a good thing for the country, if they were to break 'em," growled the other, firing up as he contemplated the indignity which had been put upon loyal Orangemen and Protestants by the preference of Roman Catholics for occasional Government posts. "Why, I say, sir, I say the Government deserves to lose our support altogether when they treat us as they do—overlook our claims upon them ; and I say they're giving away everything now to these Ribbonmen, and we shall soon have nothing but Roman Catholics governing the country. It wasn't so in my day—it wasn't so in my day—when every loyal Protestant drank the pious and immortal memory after dinner, and upheld Church and State !"

"Hear ! hear ! Colonel," cried Lyons ; "they *are* treating the Protestants very

badly, there's no mistake about it. We shall have every judge on the bench a Roman Catholic soon, and the Lord-Lieutenant too, I dare say."

"Well, I must say I cannot see," said Greville, "what religion has to do with appointments where intellectual fitness is the proper qualification. The religion of the individual, to my mind, has nothing whatever to do with it, now that civil disabilities are done away with."

Colonel Montgomery launched forth again. "Why, sir, I say, do you mean to tell me, I say, that the loyal part of the population are to be set aside for a set of ruffianly, rebellious fellows—ruffianly fellows, I say, that have done, and will do—will do—will do—all they can to upset the Government, I say, who wouldn't scruple to drag the Queen from her throne, if they could? It's monstrous, I say, it's monstrous—monstrous, monstrous!"

"It's small blame to the Protestants being loyal," said Greville, "when they've had it all their own way, and been allowed to lord

it over the Roman Catholics, and take Benjamin's mess of the appointments going. If their loyalty is only to be bought in this way, I don't think it's much to boast about. I believe the first thing the Government must do, if they want to quiet the country, is, saving your presence, to do away with Orangemen. I'm sure they do nothing but keep up the party spirit and factious feeling which is the curse of Ireland; and till they get rid of that they'll have no peace. I really think that Orangeism is almost as bad as Ribbonism."

This was too much for the staunch Orangeman, who had been fuming in his collar all the while Greville was speaking. "God, sir!" he exclaimed, "do you mean to say that when one of the rules of our society is that every man shall love his neighbour 'as if he was his brother—his brother, I say—that we are to be compared to a set of scoundrels, whose principal object is to shoot their landlords? I say, I say, the thing's ridiculous!—outrageous—outrageous! I say, ridiculous!"

“I dare say, my dear Colonel, your rules are excellent; but why don’t you keep them? The Orangemen are quite as bitter against the Roman Catholics as they are against the Protestants, and are just as often the aggressors.”

“No such thing, I say,” returned the Colonel, who was very red in the face, and twitching his napkin nervously; “the Government allows these fellows to do as they please,—to do just as they please; have their processions and display their party-flags; and God, sir, I say,—I say,—I say,—when the Protestants,—the loyal Protestants, I say,—do anything of the kind,—commemorate their glorious triumphs,—why they’re down upon ’em in a trice. There’s impartiality for you,—impartiality, I say, and good policy.”

“Well, for my part, I think it’s bad taste continually reminding the Roman Catholics that they were beaten on certain occasions. I certainly don’t think it tends to bring about an *entente cordiale* between the two religions. As long as Orangeism

and the Established Church remain, we shall not have peace in Ireland."

"Do you call yourself a Conservative, Spencer, and go against the Establishment?" cried Lyons; and his horror was shared by the rest of the party, who, though not all Orangemen, were yet Protestants, and therefore firm supporters of the Irish Church.

"Yes, I do," replied Greville; "and I believe it's the most ultimately Conservative view to hold. I don't see myself how any unprejudiced man can defend the Established Church in Ireland."

"Mark my words,—I say, mark my words!" exclaimed Colonel Montgomery,—
"if they ever attempt to do away with the Protestant Church, there'll be such a row, sir,—why, there'll be a rebellion, I say, among the loyal population in the north. We shall not stand being extinguished, I say,—I say, we shall not stand being extinguished altogether. Shall we tamely give up, I say, the liberties and rights that we've bought with our very blood,—yes, sir, our very blood? Don't think it,—I say, don't

think it ;—we shall not, we shall not. You'll have the whole loyal population in arms in defence of their blood-bought rights,—rights, I say,—rights. The north will not tamely submit to such injustice, as these fellows—I say, these fellows—in England will see, will see, will see.”

“Religious equality never could be maintained in Ireland,” said Sir Henry. “Any modification of the Establishment would only be the first step towards giving the Roman Catholics the ascendancy. Directly they got that, they would want something else. They never are satisfied till they have everything their own way. It always has been the case, and always will be. Look at the Catholic Emancipation Act. They were to have been perfectly contented when they got that. And have they been? Not a bit of it. And they wouldn't be now if they were to get the Church. No. If we are not to have our religion protected, we shall have to go elsewhere for it.”

From this assertion Greville dissented entirely. He believed that if the Protestants

had to support their own Church, it would have the most beneficial effects. At present there was a careless indifference throughout the whole body of Protestants, which he believed resulted from the position of ease and security in which they found themselves. A necessity for activity would stir them up, and make them take more interest in their religion. And, if only from jealousy of the Roman Catholics, they would take very good care that their Church was properly supported.

A warm discussion then ensued, in which all the arguments which are now so well known were advanced with their usual non-persuasive effect. And at length Lyons asked what, then, did he propose doing with the Church property, if he was for doing away with the Establishment? "Would you hand that over to the Roman Catholics?"

"No," Greville rejoined, "I shouldn't do that. As we have had it so long, I don't think it would be fair to take it away. I should leave the Church all her private property, and give back the tithe-rent charge to the landlords."

"But I don't see why the landlords should make a good thing out of it."

"They wouldn't. If it wasn't given back to them, disendowment would be equivalent to imposing another rent-charge upon them. For, of course, if the present funds of the Church were diverted, the landlords would have to pay over again to support their clergymen. If it is given back, it will, in almost every case I should say, be applied to the same purpose voluntarily, as it was before compulsorily."

"But what about Roman Catholic landlords? It would be simply a bonus to them."

"They are so very few that they need hardly be considered. *De minimis non curat lex*. And even to them it would be a reparation for all they had already paid in support of a religion which was not their own."

"I'm beginning to think you're a Papist yourself," grunted Colonel Montgomery.

"Not at all," Greville said. He was only for justice to all parties alike. And he

believed that the ill-feeling created by the original bad treatment of the Roman Catholics had been handed down from father to son since Cromwell's time, and been at the bottom of half the disturbances in the country.

"But it seems so ridiculous to me," said Sir Henry, "that people should take the trouble they do to commiserate the Roman Catholics. Why, I have a score of Roman Catholic relations, and they don't care that about it," snapping his fingers contemptuously. "Some of them say that it's a blot upon the English constitution, but they connect no sentiment with it whatever. One or two of them even say they should be very sorry to see any change."

"Because they are not so much under the influence of the priests. And educated people see that the grievance is not, in point of fact, a practical one. The priests make use of it as a lever to work the people with."

"But the priests don't care about it either. The cry is not of their making. It has been made for them. I believe they

would be very sorry if the Church was abolished, for it would diminish their influence."

"All the more reason, then, for getting rid of it at once."

"Payment from the State would have the same effect, and not alienate the Protestants to the same extent; and it would be a relief to the poorer people."

"But they say they wouldn't take payment."

"Because they know they're much too well paid now. But try them. Lodge the money in the bank, and see if they wouldn't take it. They'd be obliged to. If the farmers knew they were paid from other sources, they would stop payment very soon. I know several Roman Catholics who think that would have a much greater effect in lessening their influence than abolishing the Church. And that's what you want, after all. The influence of the priest upon the people, and the people upon the priest, mutually react upon one another, and produce the state of things we have. Forty

years ago the priests had none of the power which they have now. They have none at this moment in Italy ; the people there hate their priests. In Ireland, it originated with O'Connell. When he was agitating for Repeal, and all that nonsense, he had a political party organised by the priests in every parish. Well, he died, and they were left with a certain influence, but without a leader to point out in what direction it was to be exercised. Then, true to their nature, they used it for themselves, and keep it up now by encouraging hostility to the English Government. Their influence is entirely political ; and it is only by feeding the rebellious appetites of the people that they can retain it. Proof of that you may often see in parishes where the priest is not a strong politician. They know on what their influence depends ; and a red-hot curate, as I know for a fact in one instance, is sent down from head-quarters to keep him to his work. You see in the exceptional cases, where a priest or a bishop is favourable to English rule, his authority is set at nought.

And so it would be, I believe, if they were paid ; for, if they were no longer obliged to flatter the prejudices of the farmers, on whom they were no longer dependent, they wouldn't in many instances (where the predominant love of power was slightly developed) trouble themselves about professing the popular views ; they would then have no further weight, and the people would want the stimulus which is now provided by the active agency of the priests."

"That may be all very true," said Greville ; "but I don't believe that it would be any use to pay them, as long as the Establishment remained. They'd make it a handle to retain their influence, even though they were paid. Remove the Establishment, and then pay them, if you like ; not out of our funds, though."

"But do you really mean to say, you think that putting down the Church would quiet the country ?" asked Lyons, looking towards Greville.

"Not a bit of it," said Sir Henry, replying for him. "Take the Church grievance,

if you like to call it one, from them, and they'll work the land question. You see how they identify themselves with that, in order that they may have more than one string to their bow. And it comes natural to them to take it up. Half of them have been brought up in small cabins or farm-houses through the country; and all their lives they've been accustomed to hear about the hardship of paying rent. "Oh, the rint! the rint! that has to be paid." The grievance appeals directly to their experience, and if you don't diminish the motive for keeping alive this congenial feeling—by paying them, as I say—you'll have them as hot and strong about the land (which the people think a great deal more about) as you think they are now about the Church."

Greville rejoined, that he certainly did not believe that abolishing the Church would work wonders in itself. "But what I do think," he said, "is, that it would be useless to attempt any other remedial measure until the air had been cleared by some

such arrangement as would give the Roman Catholics their proper place."

"But," chimed in another, "they can't expect to have the same social position as Protestant clergymen. They are a different class of men; they come from a much lower grade of society."

"And they don't expect it either," said Sir Henry. "It was only the other day that the priest in my neighbourhood was boasting to me how civil the Protestant parson had been to him at some function where they met. They know very well that our clergymen are a higher class of men. They are quite conscious of their own inferiority, and, I believe, well content enough with their position. They feel that they haven't manners for society, the greater number of them. Where could they get them, bred in farm-houses, and brought up at Maynooth? The reason why the Roman Catholic gentry wish them to be paid (independently of its lessening their influence, which they very much desire) is, that they think it reflects upon them and

their religion that the priests should have to collect their stipend in the customary *infra dig.* manner, by stations and compulsory fees, and that kind of thing. This is the only sentiment they have on the subject at all; and you'll see that, if this question of the Church ever ends by the abolition of the Establishment, you'll only be stirring up the north, without in the least allaying the discontent which prevails in the rest of the country."

"The north are such a very small minority, that they would soon find discretion the better part, and accept their position; and as for putting an end to discontent, you'll never do that till you kill off its parent, poverty; but you may stop the mouths of agitators and priests, who put the general discontent into a definite form, and foment it. The expression which it assumes is rather the result than the cause. There may, perhaps, be a sort of general hatred of England forming a shadowy kind of element in it, and, possibly, the ghost of an idea that they have a right to the soil.

But it is priest's agitation grafted upon poverty which produces the fruit that every one tells you is the natural produce of the Celtic stock. Improve their condition, and then, if the priest's influence is removed, you'll have them contented and quiet."

"You never can improve their condition," said Sir Henry. "They have no energy—no knowledge—no capital—no enterprise. It's the most hopeless thing to attempt to improve them. They don't want to be improved, and they won't be improved. As long as they have a potato to put into their mouths, they're satisfied, and go to sleep, or warm their shins over the fire, for the rest of the day. The sort of landlord they prefer is a man who lets them pay their rent just as they like and when they like, or not at all if they like; who doesn't bother his head about improvements, and, in fact, lets them alone to do just as they please. If you try to improve them, they offer to shoot you."

"If you try to improve them off their land without any very good reason, perhaps

they do," replied Greville, with a smile. "But I deny that an improving landlord is not popular. I could name a dozen, in different parts in Ireland, who meet with cordial co-operation and encouragement from their tenants in their attempts to improve their properties, and who are most popular too. And even up in these mountain districts (where idleness is more particularly the vice of the people), I don't find making improvements the least unpopular. They see what an advantage it is to them in the end. And every year now I am having more applicants for an advance of rent, or a loan of money for reclaiming or building, or something of the kind. I give it to them on reasonable terms, and of course I'm glad to do it. It's as much to my profit as theirs. They become richer, and my land becomes more valuable. I don't force them to improve, but I point out to them that when the money is always there, if they only like to ask for it, it is their own loss if they don't do it."

"Ah! if all landlords now were to do

that," said Lyons, "the value of Irish property would soon increase."

"Well, all landlords can't afford to do it," said Greville. "But if absentee landlords, who can perfectly afford it, were to adopt some such system, and so spend a little more of their money upon their properties, we should hear less of this cry about tenant-right and compensation, which every good landlord recognises as a matter of course."

He forgot for the moment that Sir Henry had the name of being rather backward in recognising the justice of such claims when they clashed with the interests of his pocket. But he continued—

"Of course there are bad landlords everywhere. But take the average of resident landlords in Ireland, and I'll be bound they are as good a lot as in England or elsewhere. It is the absentees, and men who buy up small properties on speculation, who bring discredit on the tenure of land in Ireland. All they care about is to get as much as they can from their estates. And living at a distance, they are never influenced by the

feelings of humanity which a close contact with distress might and does produce. So that it would be most unjust, for the sake of a few bad specimens, to compel all Irish landlords to give long leases. A lease in Ireland is a very different thing from a lease in England. There, at the expiration of it, the land is in much the same condition probably, in most parts of the country, as it was at the commencement. Now, take this immediate neighbourhood. Thirty years ago, my property here was little more than half the value which it is now. So much land has been reclaimed from bog, drained, and brought under cultivation in the interval, and the produce has so considerably increased in value. Well, if I had been, or if my father had been, obliged to give long leases of this land (supposing the amount of reclamation to have been the same as it has been under the present system of administration), for ten, twenty, five-and-twenty years, the land would have been let at the low rent at which it commenced, and we should have been receiving a fifth part, perhaps, of the

value of the estate. It is the same with land all over Ireland. The price of produce is increasing every year, and the value of the land in proportion. Acres of bog, and waste land too, are reclaimed every year. And I consider that a tenant has had fair compensation for his industry when he has been allowed to hold his reclaimed land at the original nominal rent for a certain number of years, during which time he has paid himself over and over again for his original outlay."

"But that's just what you can't get the beggars to see," exclaimed Sir Henry. "They won't acknowledge that you have any right to your own at all. A fellow thinks he is hardly treated because, after you have allowed him the use of your land for nothing, you may say, for so long, you ask him to make some return to you by paying for it in future. A man reclaims an acre of bog, say. Time and labour and breaking cost him four or five pounds, perhaps. He plants it with potatoes, and the first year we'll say the crop hardly pays the expenses

of breaking. The next year, and the next, he gives it another dose of lime, and the second year's crop covers all expenditure for these years, and leaves him a balance in hand. The third year, and every year afterwards (supposing that he has average crops), he clears a good ten pounds an acre on land for which he is paying, perhaps, a shilling or two shillings. And when he has been allowed to pocket this profit for some years, he calls you a ruffian because you ask him to share it with the owner of the land, who gave him the ground to work upon. It's no use trying to treat them as reasonable beings. They won't listen to reason—they don't understand reason."

"A resident landlord can do a good deal towards improving them in that way: They'll take persuasion from him much more kindly than from an agent, who they think is of course only acting in the interest of the landlord. And agents, for that matter, don't trouble their heads much about entering into explanations, or smoothing down what may appear injustice to the tenant. Then it's

undoubtedly a man's interest, too, to live upon his property; for there's nothing so calculated to promote industry as the fact of his immediate presence. When the people know that he takes an interest in their farms, they'll often be ashamed that he should find the land uncared for, and untidy, and unproductive."

"Gad, I don't know," exclaimed Sir Henry; "they're a lazy, unprofitable set; they're just as pleased with a good crop of weeds as anything else."

"Well, I believe," said Greville, "that if you could make landlords live upon their properties, it would do infinitely more good than any amount of laws for fixity of tenure and all that kind of thing, which would only create unpleasantness."

"Oh! give 'em an inch," said Sir Henry, "and you may trust them to take an ell—give them the whip-hand over you, and the next thing they'll ask for will be leases for ever for nothing."

"For my part," said Greville, "I hardly ever give a lease at all, and I'm not often

asked for one. They have a proper confidence in my treating them fairly, and I always find that the men with leases have their land in the worst condition. It would be as great a mistake, as great an unkindness to the people themselves, to pass a sweeping measure, compelling landlords to give leases, as it was to emancipate the negroes. It would have been a far greater kindness to have devised some means of improving the master's treatment of the negro. And it will be infinitely better for the tenant to awaken the landlord to a sense of his responsibilities. Leases would produce more indolence, more poverty, and more discontent. The Irish nature, as every one but an English pamphleteer knows, is inactive to a degree. As long as they make sufficient to pay their rent, they are satisfied, and seldom think of making improvements. For that matter, they have no capital to do it with. And people persistently forget this when they argue from England and Scotland to the little farms of our poor country, which are the majority by far."

“Isn’t it amusing,” said Lyons, “to hear English people talking about Ireland? They think, because they may have stayed at a couple of country-houses for a week or two, that they must be competent to discuss the whole country, and every question relating to it—like Count Smorltork, in ‘Pickwick.’”

“It’s more aggravating than amusing, I think,” said Greville. “Ireland, more than any other country, I suppose, requires an intimate acquaintance with the people and their habits, and the intricate intersection of the various parties and shades of feeling among the different classes.”

“Ay, what use, I wonder,” said Sir Henry, “would it be for us to draw out leases with minute stipulations for the quantity of manure to be expended on the land every year, the succession of crops, and so forth, as they do in the Lothians? Why, in many cases the incoming tenant with us expends all his capital in the price he pays for his lease, and if he has a couple of

bad years to begin with, he's done for. And if you don't make these stipulations, you get your land back, at the end of your lease, exhausted. The tenant takes very good care, when his lease is falling in, to take out anything that he *has* put into it."

"As to fines," said Greville, "I never let a farm to the highest bidder. It never can pay in the end. The land can't produce more than a certain rent, and the Irish tenant, of all others, is not the man to make it do so. I always have the farm valued, and then get the best man I can for it, choosing one, if possible, with a few pounds of capital; but they are rare in this part of the country."

Sir Henry was objecting that if you don't take the highest bidder, you would be accused of favouring, when his remarks were rudely interrupted by a prolonged snore from Colonel Montgomery, who had been for the last half-hour nodding his head in unconscious acquiescence to remarks which, under any other circumstances, would have

called forth a captious negative. The laughter of the others woke him up with a testy grunt, and the rest of the party having finished their wine, a motion for adjournment was carried without opposition.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE are few combinations of time, place, and circumstance more thoroughly enjoyable than the first day on the heather in mid-August. There is the novelty of having your gun once more in use, the renewed anticipation of sport, the elasticity of spirit, the air, the scenery, the deep purple bloom on the mountain side, and the lights and shadows on the distant hills; and there is the sense of having risen above the world, and left your cares and troubles, whatever they may be, below, which is, perhaps, one of the chief elements in that buoyancy of mind which makes your step so light and your laugh so gay. Greville and his party are slowly winding up the slope which stretches away behind the house. The dogs are on in front with the keeper; hangers-on

of various kinds behind, some one or two having tacked themselves on to the retinue merely in the hope of seeing sport. This love of sport is an instinct in the Irish nature. They take as keen an interest in anything of the kind as if they had been brought up to it all their lives, even liking the questionable amusement of beating, that they may have the satisfaction of applauding a good shot with "That was well done!" or, "More power, your honour." It is only another evidence of the freer, brighter, fresher, more independent spirit which underlies their nature. Poverty cramps it, but it's there; and as they must have a vent for their spirits, they take to breaking each other's heads sometimes for pure fun. It's worth going out for a bad day's shooting, even to hear the jokes which fly about among the beaters. You never meet an Irishman who can't appreciate a joke,—do you often come across an English rustic who can? No—abuse them as you please; call them liars, beggars, impostors; tie a long string of vices round their necks, but they'll laugh at you

out of the middle of it; and you will have to confess eventually that they *are* the finest peasantry in the world; and that in no other country has Nature sown so many seeds of that intuitive delicacy, sensitive sympathy, and instinctive honour from which the true gentleman springs.

The shooting party are presently joined by a mountain keeper, who rejoices in the somewhat redundant Christian name of Jemmy Neddy; and who, with his merry twinkling eye, rich brogue, and rollicking gait, seems the very *beau idéal* of a thoroughly good-humoured, ragged, laughter-loving Irishman, whose spirits even the mists of a "melancholy ocean" have been unable to damp. He welcomes his honour to his own mountain with great cordiality, takes off his hat to the strange gentlemen, and gives the hangers-on a "Good morrow, boys," in a lower tone.

"That's a fine day, Jemmy," says Greville.

"Fine day itself," he replies; "the Lord be praised."

“What stock of birds have you got for us?” asks his master.

“Bedad, there’s a power of grouse, then, *surely*,” replies Jemmy Neddy, emphatically. “They’re lying in it as thick as peas, your honour,” he adds, with a cheerful confidence which admits of no denial.

“You haven’t been treading on them, I hope.”

“Well, it’s not for the want of them, indeed.”

J. N., in fact, had never seen the like, and drew largely upon his fancy for similes which should do justice to the stock upon the ground. Some parts, he said, you’d think might be paved with them, such a layer was in it upon turns. In the lower grounds, again, the people were saying that there wasn’t a blade of corn left with them for the grouse, which were in such wonderful numbers that the air would be black with them now and again. The whole place, in fact, was alive, crawling with moor-fowl, and Jemmy Neddy would think it strange indeed if they didn’t

be getting good shooting *this* day, any way.

He continued to rattle on in the same glib and imaginative manner, provoking approving smiles and "Ah! Jemmy Neddy's the boy;" "Isn't he a great man to talk, now?" or similar marks of interest from the men behind, until they arrived at the spot where the keeper had halted with the dogs, and proposed to commence operations.

J. N., being appealed to as to the best direction to go in, said that it would be as good for them to take it out of face (thereby meaning that they should take the whole side before them); but they couldn't go wrong, he said, whichever way they went,—one part was as good as another when the grouse were so plentiful.

This was good news; and Egerton started off with Lyons, prepared for a point at once. But, curiously enough, the dogs continued to range far and wide for nearly half an hour, without acknowledging the presence of game. "They must be leaving birds behind them," he said. "They must, in-

deed," the keeper replied. But he was assured that they must come in upon them soon—they would meet with them shortly; and for a time he continued to think that they would. But the good ground never came; and he found out by degrees that it was not necessary to go to the desert for a mirage—that the same phenomenon was to be observed through the medium of a mountain keeper's imagination on Galway hills. The farther they went, the farther this good ground receded; and, abandoning at last all hope of ever reaching it, he gave his whole attention to the mechanical motion required for jumping from tussock to tussock. Very different walking this from the dry moors of Scotland. Here he seemed, as he expressed it, a kind of jumping Jehoshaphat, always in the air, when he was not struggling with one leg up to the knee in a bog. The birds, too, would get up when he was in mid-air, and trying to steady himself on the apex of the next tussock, his gun would go off without any kind of aim, and he would disappear from off his perch

(back or forwards, as the case might be), rising again with an unpleasantly cold and clammy feeling about the back. Those dogs, too, and that keeper! (J. N. had been assigned to Harry and Lyons and their dogs.) No wonder they worked badly: the man's tongue was never quiet. What with whistling, and calling, and cracking his whip, and swearing, and indulging in the most marvellous noises that ever issued from mouth of man,—it was enough to bewilder any dog of ordinary education. Then he *would* run forward after either of the shooters had clean missed a bird, to see where it fell; of course, putting up other birds as he went. And yet the original bird, to his great astonishment, did not fall. "Wasn't it wonderful, now, that he'd be able to fly that distance, after getting that much shot?" If a feather resulted, "Begob, he got a great tatthering!"

Lyons again. Jealous was not the word for his shooting. Did the dogs point, away he went pounding up to them, took Harry's bird if he did get up in time before they

rose, or claimed it afterwards if he missed his own. If a single bird got up—palpably Egerton's—Lyons had it down before Harry could get his gun to his shoulder, apologised profusely, and did the same thing again on the first opportunity; if they both fired at once, assumed a smiling consciousness of having bagged the bird, which was, perhaps, more irritating than all. He very nearly shot one of the dogs, too. It was not the black of his nail from him, the keeper said. And then he began to talk to Harry about the precautions one ought always to take out shooting, as if Egerton, and not himself, had nearly killed the best dog in the kennel. What a relief it was to come up with the rest of the party, and to hear the keeper tell Jemmy Neddy to let a screech out of him to the boy with the luncheon basket!

While waiting for luncheon, Jemmy Neddy's lively imagination is again called into play to find reasons for their not having yet come upon the numerous packs of grouse which were supposed to lie so thickly upon the ground. He was quite equal to the

occasion, and insisted that they had all the best ground before them still. But he confessed to some surprise at not having met with more birds in what they had already travelled, "for they'll be in it mostly every minute and every hour of the day," he said.

Basket unpacked, dogs and men retire to the rear, and the shooters lean against the rock, munching their sandwiches and looking down upon the view. It was a bright, warm, August day. The river below them was glittering in the rays of a burning sun, now softly gliding between green meadows and bushy brakes, now sparkling through rocky clefts, or losing itself beneath the dark shade of distant woods. The battlements of the house just peeped from the plantations below them, and the distance was filled up with the mountains of Connemara,—fading, still fading, till they were lost or merged in the blue depths beyond. Fleecy clouds relieved the clearness of the sky, throwing their changing shadows over many a heathery slope, or reposing them lightly upon the bosom of sleeping lochs

amid the glens. Peace was upon all, and peace had wedded beauty, and their offspring was delight.

Why, indeed, should Scotland be so favoured above all, when Ireland, too, affords such picturesque attraction? Echo hears the question in her distant cave among the hills, and repeats it to the whispering airs which wait upon her call. At once her sighing assonance is wafted to the gales; light-footed breezes speed it o'er the deep, and England melts, perhaps, at the gentle, melancholy tones, which float in upon her careless ear like the wild, despairing note of some dying swan.

Luncheon is finished, flasks succeed, and water is procured from the clear mountain stream at their feet, where the men have been quenching the "great drouth" occasioned by the heat of the day. Pipes are lighted, and J. N. is again summoned to point out the best direction to take.

He was in doubt which to recommend. There was a reasonable share of birds, he said, about the low bars above Oiny Tom's

land, and there were good packs up above, too, "if they're in it,"—which was a judicious saving clause.

"Will they be at home, do you think?" Lyons asked.

"Oh! damn the hate I know, sir!—your honour, that is" (they use "sir" in addressing each other). "They be to be there, for I never seen it without them."

Jemmy Neddy even went so far as to specify a pack of ten forenenst them, which he could state positively he had never seen fail. "And another of twelve away yonder," he continued, waving his arm vaguely towards the neighbouring hill, "and more of them scattered about in every direction, for-bye there."

"What's that, your honour?" he asked, having been so full of the coming sport that he had not caught Harry's question upon partridges in the low lands. "Is it partridges? Not a colour of one ever was in it;—isn't it too moist entirely? But it's grouse that ye'll get there in the latther ind of the saison. By japers! the noise

they'll be making with their crowin' in the mornin's had like to deafen a man." Jemmy Neddy had a right to know, he said, for didn't he see them sitting by scores upon the ditches all round his own house, looking at him?

"Well, which way, Jemmy, — up or down?" asked Greville at last, getting up from the heather.

He was told that it would be a good chance below,—there was no better ground. But his informant would not say at the same time that the high ground was not every bit as good.

There was a decision in the reply which left no doubt upon their minds which line to adopt, and they started off accordingly, and shot on till evening, making a total bag of some five-and-thirty brace.

Large bags were never made in Ireland, Greville said to Harry, as they walked home together. "The mountains are too wet, for one thing. And another is that people don't take any trouble about it. If English people were to come over here as they do to

Scotland, you'd soon see the shooting improve."

Harry wondered why they didn't; supposed that a moor was to be had much cheaper in Ireland than in Scotland.

"For a quarter of the money," Greville said; "and just as good shooting in some of them, if it was properly looked after. But there's an absurd prejudice in England against everything Irish. Now my mother hates the country—for what reason I can't tell you. People think that they are safe to be shot if they come to Ireland. They fancy that we are only in a state of half-civilisation, and they'll continue to think so till they make themselves a little more intimately acquainted with us. It's that same feeling of insecurity which prevents capitalists bringing their money here. Ireland has resources enough for any amount of capital, but we have no means of developing them; and we shall remain poor and backward till English capital does something for us. You see how much better off the people are in neighbourhoods like Belfast,

where capital has found its way. There's nothing stimulates energy like competition and emulation. When a man sees his neighbour improving and becoming richer than himself, and leaving him behind, jealousy, if nothing else, makes him more active in looking after his own interests."

"But they're a better class of people up in the north, ain't they? Isn't there a lot of Scotch blood up there?" asked Egerton.

"There is. And you see how the force of example works. Now, here in the mountains they have never had any stimulus to industry such as expenditure of capital offers, and they hardly know what industry is. Whenever I can get a good man from another part of the country to come here, I give him a farm at a low rent, and plant him for the benefit of the others. About here, too, there are a good many Roman Catholic landlords, who, as a rule, are not an improving set of men. They are generally harder upon their tenants, for they know they can be so with more impunity.

Any hostility they may excite will not be countenanced by the priest in the same way as it would if they were Protestants. Then there are a good many Protestant absentees, who never think that, besides the more substantial benefits which their tenantry lose by their non-residence, the influence which they ought to exercise in counteracting the power of the priests is also lost to the neighbourhood. I never have the least scruple in telling my tenants how to vote at an election. They haven't education or judgment enough to form an opinion for themselves, and if I didn't lead them the priest would. To introduce the ballot into Ireland would be simply to hand over the country to priests' rule. But people will go on declaiming, I suppose, not knowing what they are talking about, and the country will remain pretty much as it is."

"But now, how would you expend capital?" Harry asked. "Here, for instance,—what would you do?"

"Well, just in this immediate neighbourhood, perhaps, there wouldn't be any opening

for it, except in making a railway. If the Government were to take charge of the railways, and increase the communication throughout the country, and lower the tariff for goods' carriage, it would give a fillip to industry, and very soon, I believe, attract more capital. For people can't go on fancying that money invested in land or mines, or that kind of property, ever could be thrown away or lost, because there were occasional disturbances in the country. And the more employment the people have, the less they will think about their wrongs. Expenditure of capital will produce security. The one influence reacts upon the other."

"But then, don't they say that it's disheartening spending money upon labour in Ireland; that the Irishman is so lazy he doesn't give good value for his pay?"

"People who don't want to spend money say so. But I never heard that the people who work in the manufacturing towns in Ireland are a worse class of workmen than those in England or Scotland. There are a

few excellent Irishmen who think fit to cry down their own country, and help to spread these notions. Colonel Montgomery there will tell you that a railway is the most damnable invention that it ever entered into the mind of man to conceive. And he has the most absurd notions about the Government taking the management of the railways. 'I say, the very idea of such a thing, I say! Have a Government official at every railway station, influencing the elections! I say, Government spy—Government spy—wouldn't countenance it for a moment.' He has a good deal of property up in Ulster, and these are the sort of notions that he expects will improve it."

"They seem to run the trains in a very casual kind of way now," Harry said; "when the guard has had his joke the train goes on—time apparently of no consequence. And the stations give one the idea of an idle country. There are always a lot of people loafing about with their hands in their pockets, as if they had nothing to do."

“They would give up being idle if they had something found for them to do ; they haven’t the means or the wish to find it for themselves.”

A man, better dressed than the ordinary native, and with a close-cut beard, passed at this moment, and Greville continued, “That’s one of the men who do more harm in the country than even the priests. That man was in America for two or three years, and came back here a year ago full of all sorts of wild notions, which he spreads among the people, making them more discontented than ever with their poverty. He takes in a rebellious newspaper, too, and reads the inflammatory articles aloud, I’m told. He was turned out of the work a short time ago, for getting up gambling in the village. The whole neighbourhood used to gamble, and raffle their poultry, and meet in his house to play cards at night—very much, of course, to his profit. But can you fancy four ragged Irishmen sitting down to play whist, fowl points, and a turkey on the rubber ?”

Harry laughed, as he admitted that it was a kind of chicken-hazard of which he had had no previous experience.

“Do you see that old woman?” Greville asked presently, pointing to a stooping form in front of them. “You wouldn’t think, perhaps, that she was your nurse once!”

“Oh! is that the old woman I met yesterday?” exclaimed Harry.

“Where did you meet her?”

He explained the strange interview which they had had.

“Oh! she’s quite mad,” Greville said. “She has had a pension from me for a long time. I never could get her to leave the cabin her husband had when he was alive, or else I should have made her more comfortable somewhere. If she prefers living by herself, though, it is best to let her be.”

They had come up with her as Greville finished speaking, and he stopped and inquired kindly after her health and comfort.

“Oh, he was always very good to her, indeed,” she answered, with a long-drawn, absent sigh; and then, as her eye fell upon

Harry, the expression of her face changed, and the same wild, anxious look came over it which had startled him the day before. She pointed her bony finger at him, and asked Greville, in a husky voice, what brought *him* into the country? It wasn't him she nursed; it was his brother, his brother; and she broke into a laugh, which left a disagreeable impression upon the minds of those who listened to it.

Greville asked her if she didn't remember taking care of Harry as well, when they were in Italy; but her answers were strange and incoherent. The subject didn't seem to be a soothing one, and they walked on and left her to fall on her knees, and throw her hands above her head with such wild gesticulations, that the superstitious natives who were following edged away to the opposite side of the road, for fear of coming within her influence.

"Isn't it rather odd," Harry said, "that she should get so excited when she sees me? It doesn't seem to be love."

"It is rather odd," Greville said. Then,

turning round to one of the men behind, he asked, "What would you take, Pat, to keep house for old Biddy?"

"Oh! sorra much I'd be livin' with her at all, your honour," was the reply.

"Wouldn't she be good company?"

"Divil a much I know about her, then. They're tellin' queer tales in the country of what she'll be sayin' when the fit's on her."

"What do they say?" asked Greville.

"Oh! not a one of me knows, your honour," said Pat, throwing up his chin. "They'll be sayin' that she'll talk a deal of his honour here," looking at Harry; "and more about his honour's brother—that's Mr. Egerton—and her ladyship that was his mother, and plenty more besides."

"But what does she say about them?" asked Harry.

"Well, I couldn't say, indeed, your honour. It's what I hear them talkin' in the country. There's times when she's quiet enough; but the counthry people believes that his riverence knows more nor what

any other person does about th' ould 'oman."

"What sort of a priest have you got?" asked Lyons, who had fallen back from the party in front.

"Father Murphy! Oh, he's a first-rate fellow," answered Greville. "That white house there is his. If he knew we were in this direction, he'd insist upon our coming in to feed; he's importunate sometimes in his hospitality. He met us going out to shoot those coverts over there one day, and made us promise to take him on our way back; and, when we looked in at five o'clock, had a regular collation spread out—shoulder of mutton, turkey (just killed), port and sherry, and all kinds of things; crammed our plates, and wouldn't be denied, though it was within a couple of hours of dinner."

"That good old sort is dying out," said Lyons. "You don't often come across a foreign-educated priest now,—do you?"

"No. And it's a pity," Greville replied. "Besides being more polished and gentle-

manlike, they were more liberal. Now they come up from the people saturated with the prejudices of the country—narrow-minded to a degree, and with the one idea of keeping their hold upon the people and pandering to their prejudices, never mind by what petty acts and meannesses. Father Murphy was educated in Spain; and notwithstanding a strong partiality for whiskey, he still has a manner that would put to shame half the gentlemen one meets. We'll have him to dinner some night when the Colonel goes."

And accordingly, a few days afterwards, when the Orangeman had left, Father Murphy was asked to dine.

Greville was quite right. There were distinctly the manner and feelings of a gentleman beneath that portly waistcoat and rubicund face. A slightly perceptible shyness, perhaps, caused by the feeling that he was in an unusual position dining at a Protestant's table. It is only the most independent priests who do so. They think, as a rule, that by appearing in the enemy's

camp in a friendly way, their influence among their own people will be impaired.

Father Murphy was engaged in a lively conversation with his host when Egerton entered the room before dinner, and a curious observer might have noted a slight start of interest in his small grey eyes as Greville mentioned Harry's name; but it was only momentary, and his bow was as courtly and polished as bows are said to have been fifty years ago. The slight absence, too, which his next reply betrayed might have been occasioned by any unknown cause within his waistcoat. Harry certainly thought, though, when he happened to look up once during dinner, and found Father Murphy's keen eye fixed upon him, that there was an unusual look of interest in it which he was at a loss to account for. Struck by his appearance, he possibly thought, and liked him accordingly.

A fear of dropping incautious remarks before the servants subdued his reverence's conversation during dinner; but when the whiskey and hot water and "materials"

were on the table, he was the best company possible—full of anecdote and general information; spoke with great respect about the Protestant clergymen—(from motives of delicacy the Church question was not much alluded to by any of the party)—touched slightly upon the advantages of denominational education, and was justly indignant at the slight put upon the country by the persistent absence of royalty. “Why, sir, it’s a thing,” he said, “that wouldn’t be tolerated in any country in Europe. How can Englishmen expect the Irish people to like their rule and to feel a profound attachment to their Queen, when they never see her? Why, I wonder there’s a loyal man left in the country.”

With this sentiment, at least, none of the party disagreed. But when he began to deplore the emigration mania, which was depopulating the country, Greville and Sir Henry both were at issue with him there.

“We shall not agree upon that point, Father Murphy,” said Greville, who had

often argued the question with him before. "It would be a different thing if the emigration was from the middle or east of the country, where the farms are larger, and the population not more than the land can support; but when it's nearly all from these mountain districts, where many of them, as they say, have neither cow nor calf, ewe nor lamb, bit nor sup, why they couldn't do better than go where they can get good wages, and leave more room for those who stay behind."

"Not a doubt of it," chimed in Sir Henry. "There's twice the population in Ireland that there ought to be; and I shall be very glad to see it half as thin again as it is now."

"Ah, isn't it a dreadful thing to see the poor creatures leaving their homes like that?" said the priest, who, in common with most of his fraternity, deeply deplored the exodus of his dues.

"They're much better off in America," Greville said. "They can live like human beings there, and very often are able to

send home money to their relations. Here they live a sort of troglodyte life, many of them. They never could do anything more than just pay the rent of their small holdings; and their cabins are not worthy of the name of houses."

Father Murphy still dissented, and Sir Henry took up the thread of the conversation. "If I had my way," he said, "I'd clear off seventy per cent. of them, and throw all these miserable little potato gardens into respectable farms; and then you might expect some civilisation. But, damme! you might as well go and hang yourself at once as propose to do anything of the kind. Why, your life wouldn't be worth a minute's purchase. They'd shoot you down like a dog for daring to interfere with their squalor and wretchedness."

"Ah, you're hard upon the poor things," said Father Murphy. "They have a great fondness for their little bits of land, Sir Henry; and it doesn't do to be too rough with them."

"It *would* be rather a strong measure to

make a clean sweep like that," said Greville. "I'm all for their going; but I shouldn't think of turning them out if they didn't want to go. The worst of it is that all the able-bodied men go, and leave the old men and women behind to take care of the place; and then the land goes to the bad, and labour becomes scarce. So that it isn't very much to the benefit of the landlord, however much it may be of the people themselves."

From this to other topics of local interest, until they retired into the drawing-room, where Harry soon found himself engaged in a hunting conversation with his reverence, who had numbers of good stories to tell in reference to that subject. By a natural transition they came to the former owner of Castle Greville; and then Harry asked if he had known his mother.

Oh, he had known Mrs. Egerton ever since she was a child!

"And his father?"

He had seen something of Mr. Egerton, too, during his visits.

But upon this subject the worthy father

had not so much to say. In fact, he became curiously reserved, Harry thought. And as some one else joined in their conversation at this juncture, he had no further opportunity of analysing his reserve.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAD delusion! The Irish weather seemed to think that it had a character to lose, and for really several days in succession it was cheerful, and even brilliant. In wandering over sunny moors, or throwing flies across breezy pools and glancing rapids, the time passed quickly away into September; and, amid the varied attractions of a wild country life, Egerton had almost forgotten all about his debts and his difficulties. At all events, they were put aside for the present, until unpleasantly reminded of them one rainy morning by a budget of bills and letters, which "some d——d good-natured friend" had forwarded from his club.

It was a gloomy morning for such a gloomy reminder. The rain poured down unceasingly, and dribbled down the window-

panes ; the wind rumbled mournfully down the old chimneys. There was a chill and wintry look without, and dead leaves came tapping at the windows as the rattling gusts hurried past. Harry had been left alone in the breakfast-room to digest his post, and he was gradually lapsing into that delightful state of hopelessness and despair to which he had become almost accustomed before leaving London. He sat, letters in hand, before the fire, which the damp chilliness of the day had rendered necessary ; and his eyes, wandering upwards from the grate, fixed themselves, at length, upon his mother's picture. It was a similar one to that in his father's study ; and as he gazed now upon "the meek intelligence of those dear eyes," he wondered whether he would have been in a better position if she had been alive—longed to have felt her kind sympathy, and to have been able to return the love which that face expressed. He knew he could have loved that picture ; and his father, he thought, never could have scouted him as he had done, if he had had a mother

to plead for his youthful extravagances—a mother such as she would have been, in whom he could have confided, and who would have sympathised with his every feeling. It seemed as if there was something wanting, had been something left out all through his life, not having ever had a mother's tender care and loving watchfulness to soften the hardness of a male surrounding. And a tear stole into his eye, as fancy pictured to him the happiness there might have been in the love of that graceful woman. Her whole expression breathed of kindliness, and affection, and sympathy, and all the softer virtues and charms of woman's nature, which were heightened in his eyes, at the present moment, by the halo which the image of a mother shed around them.

But his soft, absorbing melancholy, so sweetly sad, was rudely dissipated, on a sudden, by the noisy entrance of his mother's namesake and her brother, who ran up to him with a gaiety which no dull weather could damp, and climbed up one on each knee with such a laughing "Good morning,"

and such infectious spirits, that Dull Care was sent about his business forthwith.

“Jump me, Cousin Harry,” cries little Walter; and up he goes to the ceiling, with a scream of delight. Once more—again—now another; and then it is Constance’s turn. Perilous feats of gymnastics are succeeded by an equestrian performance, in which the horse is not spared by either of his riders. And now he has turned the tables on them, and is chasing them round the room, and through the hall, to the great delight of the little pair, and to his own relief.

It’s a happy power not vouchsafed to everyone, that of making oneself agreeable to children. Some men, I suppose, are too stiff—have no sympathy with the exuberance of young spirits; others, perhaps, are too self-conscious, too painfully alive to the nonsense which they are talking or acting, and thinking how ridiculous they would appear to anyone who happened to be looking on; and a good many, of course, have not the requisite amount of good-nature which makes

it seem worth their while to try and contribute to anybody else's happiness. Harry Egerton, however, did not belong to the latter class, or, for that matter, the former either; for Walter and Constance were resting from the laborious pleasure which he had been providing for them, each with a hand of his in their own, and chattering to him with childish glee, when their father entered the room, and they ran to meet him.

"Do you feel inclined to face the rain, and come to petty sessions?" asked Greville, when the children had gone through their morning embrace.

Egerton was perfectly indifferent to the rain. "Anything better than staying in the house;" and so, after duly providing themselves with frieze coats and waterproofs, they started on an Irish car for the sessions-house, two or three miles distant. Harry was accommodated with a seat on the bench, and inhaled with great gusto, for an hour or two, the steam of wet fustian and unclean garments, and persons of motley appearance. Some of the cases were amusing enough,

from the sharpness and equivocation of the witnesses. One old woman particularly was a fund of laughter in herself. The way she sat down and looked at the attorney, the fixed expression of caution on her wrinkled face, the careful way in which she weighed every question before answering it, determined not to be caught tripping, and then the feigned stupidity and comic expression of sham bewilderment which she assumed when hard pressed, were a small dramatic entertainment in their way.

It was a trivial case of robbing a small shopkeeper, and the woman had been called as a witness against her own daughter, who was the accused. The point which the attorney seemed anxious to make was, that money had been given to her in a certain week by her daughter, which the latter had not been able satisfactorily to account for, something of the kind having been hinted to a neighbour.

After attempting to arrive at his point by a circuitous route, which long practice had taught him to be the only way of

approaching an Irish witness, and finding that the old woman was as sharp as himself, and that he had elicited absolutely nothing by his questions, he continued at last in an angry brogue,—“Now, old woman, will you answer me this,—did you, or did you not, receive money from your daughter in that week?”

“And why wouldn’t I?” she asks.

The attorney’s face clears. Committed her to it at last. “And now, my good woman, will you tell me, was it five shillings or ten shillings, or maybe more, that she gave you?”

“What ’ud ail me? Sure isn’t her wages half-a-crown the week, and doesn’t she always give me that, and I boardin’ her? And not at all too much, your worship, either. Wouldn’t she pay that, and more, with any other woman? and isn’t it right that she’d live with her own mother, that’s a widow, and a poor lone woman?”

Prevailed upon at last to give her attention to the amount actually handed over to her, she answers—“And how would she

give me more than her wages, I'd like to know? Isn't she a poor sarvin' girl?—and it isn't the likes of them that's too full of money. It's well on to ten years, your worship, since the ould man died,—God rest his soul!—and not a day since but what—— Is it money you're talkin' about?"—in answer to another question, —“what money at all?”

“What you told Widow Clancy you got that week. Tell me, how much was it?”

“Sure, *I* gave no money to Widow Clancy, nor she to me, and she'll tell you the same herself.” (The individual in question had since had a stroke of paralysis, so that it was very safe to refer to her.) “Haven't we been neighbours this five years? and it's myself that ought to know. Sure, your worship, the ould man was a sister's son of her own father, and afore he died,—peace be to his soul!—he'd tell me oftentimes his own self——”

Attorney is now very angry indeed, and puts a final question with a terrifying expression of countenance, shaking his fist

close to her face. "Tell me this, ye ould fiend!—will you tell the Court, or will you not tell the Court, what money you got from your daughter in that week?"

The old woman looks at him for a moment, and, turning to the bench, clasps her hands as she appeals to their compassion. "He wants to frighten me, your worships,—the poor lone widow!" A ragged handkerchief is applied to her eyes, which are moist with the ready tears, and Harry conceals his laughter at the attorney's discomfiture, as he tells her that she may go down, and bad luck to her for a wicked old woman.

The aggrieved shopkeeper himself was called next, and after giving his evidence, was cross-examined by the girl's attorney.

"You're not married, I think, Mr.—What's your name?—Mr. Malone?"

MR. MALONE. Well, indeed I am, sir.

ATTORNEY. And what age is your wife?

MR. M. (*with emotion*). Would yiz ask

what age is a woman that's in her grave this good while?

ATT. Sure you told me you were married, man?

MR. M. Wasn't I married once?

ATT. (*angrily*). Did I ask were you married once? Don't I want to know are you married now?

MR. M. Well, if it please you, I am not then.

ATT. (*insinuatingly*). But maybe you'd not think you're too old at all for marrying again.

MR. M. (*jauntily*). Indeed I would not. (*Laughter in Court.*)

ATT. That's what they're saying in the country. But I wouldn't doubt that it's every bit as pleasant to be a boy?

MR. M. (*who doesn't see the drift of these questions*). Well, indeed, I can't say.

ATT. (*seductively*). Yes, but I'll engage you can say, Mr. Malone. Isn't it coorting the girls you are as well as the youngest among them? And, indeed, what

wonder? for you're a well-looking man enough.

Smothered laughter,—Mr. Malone's plainness being undeniable; but he shifted his position on his chair, smoothed his hat, and admitted that the women liked his society.

ATT. I expect you'll be making some of them presents now and again; it isn't every one that has the means, like yourself, and has the liberal hand.

Mr. Malone did not deny that a bit of ribbon, or the like, might have passed between them on turns; "but that's no harm, any way. And if a man's a well-looking man, it's not himself he has to thank for that." (*Mr. M. was not a popular man, and his modest speech was received with very disrespectful jeers.*)

ATT. (*with significant glance to the bench*). And is it true that the prisoner was in love with yourself?

MR. M. Ah! how would I know? It's like enough.

ATT. She's a fine long lump of a girl, I'm thinking.

MR. M. She is then,—more's the pity.

ATT. Was she long in the house?

MR. M. She was, a good while.

ATT. And she got never a present at all, I dare say.

MR. M. (*with energy*). Not a hate ever she got, except that she took it herself.

ATT. Will you swear that?

MR. M. I will—barrin' a bit of a handkerchief she begged from me at Christmas last.

ATT. (*glancing triumphantly towards the bench, severely to Mr. Malone.*) You may go down, sir. It's ashamed of yourself you ought to be. An old man, with a family and all, to be carrying on in a way that the whole country's laughing at you.

The prisoner was put upon the table again, and questioned by her own attorney as to whether Mr. Malone had not given her the money.

Apprehending the drift of his question at once, she solemnly asserted that it was the case, notwithstanding the ejaculations of Mr. Malone down below, who invoked the

Deity to bear witness to the lies she was telling, and was eventually removed from Court by the police. The attorney then proceeded to build, upon the admission of the handkerchief, an airy castle of inference, pointing out how evident it was to the intelligence of their worships that the money had been given to the girl for a purpose which Mr. Malone (the old rip!) was ashamed to have known, and that when it had come to be talked about through Widow Clancy, to save his own character he had basely and meanly accused this poor girl, his dupe, of stealing. Wasn't it a shame to see a man—an ugly old man like him, too—with a family of children, behaving in the way he was?—to think that any man could be found so mean as to first take away a girl's character for modesty, and then, in order to save his own, try and make her out to be a thief! He worked himself up to such a pitch of native eloquence, that the picture he drew of the blighted homestead, the weeping girl, the sorrowing mother, and the deep-dyed villain, was really most touching

(particularly if you knew that it was all done for half-a-crown), and made a great impression upon their worships on the bench.

Greville happened to be out of Court at the time, and these worthies, after the attorney had concluded his impassioned appeal for the acquittal of his client, put their heads together, and decided that it was a most gross case, really a most scandalous action on the part of the prosecutor, and acquitted the girl forthwith. The ugly and respectable shopkeeper, besides being convicted of being a Don Juan, was also required to pay the defendant's costs.

Solvuntur risu tabulæ, as frequently happens at petty sessions.

"That day's mendin', your honour," remarked the ostler, as he arranged the reins for Greville shortly after.

"It is, Pat. We shall have a fine evening yet. How's Mrs. Dolan, and all the family?"

"Well, thank your honour. I hope your honour and the childer's well?"

“The Lord be praised for that!” rejoined Pat, on receiving an affirmative answer, “for they’re beautiful childer *surely*. Safe home, your honours.” And the car drives on down the dirty street, where tail-coated and knee-breeched natives were lolling at the shop doors, in full gossip and indolence. Many a hearty good wish is sent after Greville as he passes, and the women trudging home with their shoes in their hands, give him a cheerful curtsy in return for his greeting, and look after him with a grateful respect as he leaves them behind.

“Ah, you wouldn’t have seen shoes at all some years ago,” he said, in reply to some observations of Egerton’s upon the peculiar mode which the people had of wearing those articles. “There’s a very noticeable improvement in the dress of the people,” he continued. “You don’t see half as much rags now as you used to, but there’s a good deal more than I like still. If they could only be induced to take a little more interest in themselves, it would do a deal of

good. Now, look at those men leaning on their spades,—they're only too glad to have something to stare at, as an excuse for resting for a few minutes. Look at that bit of lighted turf, too ; you never see men working in Ireland without a coal to light their pipes from every now and then. They wouldn't work at all, I believe, if they couldn't rest at intervals to smoke."

"Such was the talk they held upon their way," as they drove along in the brilliant sunlight, which broke fitfully through the heavy masses of clouds that were sweeping across the patches of deep blue sky. The dripping hedges and trees sparkled merrily in the clear light, and the colours on the woods and distant heather were ever changing, as the shadows swept across them, with that cheery effect which belongs only to sunshine after rain. Fresh, bright, exhilarating atmosphere, the spirits could hardly be so ill-mannered as not to acknowledge your effect upon them !

"You see that donkey with her young

one," said Greville, laughing, as they drove up to the house,—“Constance used to have her milk to drink every morning. I found, one day, that she didn't get as much as she ought to have, so I ordered the donkey to be muzzled. After a day or two, still less came in, and I went out, and positively found the mother muzzled, and the young one fattening on what little he could get. Irish, eh?”

The doorstep put an end to their laughter, and Greville proceeded to inquire after the wants of the several men and women who daily waited about the door to ask favours, make complaints, get dispensary tickets, or beg. Patient people, the Irish. If he was not at home, they would stand about all day quite contented till he returned. Possibly they knew that, whenever through his fault they had had a long wait, there was food in the kitchen for them before they set off home again. If it was very late, however, they preferred foregoing the meal to having a late walk through the dark. In Ireland the

country-people don't like being out at night if they can help it, and it is a very stray native who will say good night to you on the road, if you are out an hour or two after dark.

CHAPTER XIV.

EGERTON had received other correspondence that morning besides his budget of bills and lawyers' letters. We'll look them over with him in his room, before he dresses for dinner.

Maud Greville's was the first that presented itself,—very affectionate, and very underlined. Mamma and herself had been so *very* glad to hear that he *was* at Castle Greville, although they *had* gone away *before* he arrived. Maud was sure that her mother must have been *delighted* to see him, and sent so MUCH love, and I don't know how many kisses, to the children, combined with an important message to Conny in reference to a promised doll. "Uncle Philip," she went on, "has another attack of gout, and cannot leave his room. I'm sure he

misses you very much, Harry, because when we are by ourselves he *is* so cross. Mamma says she tried to say something about you the other day, and he stopped her at once, and said that your name was *never* to be mentioned to him. It is *too* cruel. I have not enjoyed myself A BIT this year without you," &c., &c., for a sheet or two more. Pleasant reading, women's letters. They have not a soul above details, like their more fortunate lords, whose letters, as a rule, are so full of entertainment, so tersely and so well expressed.

"Poor little Maud!" quoth Harry;—"stupid enough for her, I dare say. I wonder if my father does miss me!" He rather hoped that he did; wondered whether he had fished alone this year,—taken Philip, perhaps. And the notion of Philip's ever doing anything he didn't care about, to please anyone else, unless there was something to be gained by it, amused him for a moment or two. Then he wondered whether it was very wrong to dislike his brother, for he certainly did dislike Philip, and always

had, he thought. Heigho ! by Jove ! there was a letter from Tom Manners, which had hitherto escaped his notice. "I wonder what you are about, you extravagant beggar !" he said, as he tore open the envelope, and displayed Tom's bold scrawl.

"The greatest larks, my dear Harry, you can imagine, after you left us. Devilish nearly wrecked going round the Mull of Cantire—touch and go, old boy ; rigging flying, and the devil's own sea. Skindles only saved by a fluke from being washed overboard,—in a blue funk the whole time. We weathered it safe enough, though, and here I am pursuing the wily stag. We had rare fun in the Hebrides,—what do you think of a seal drive ? It was the greatest joke you ever saw, to see those clumsy beggars lolloping along into the water. We got aground in Loch Moidart before going there, and had a deuce of a job to get her off. A confounded son of a sea-cook ran us on to a rock, having previously told us that he ought to know something about the coast, for he'd been born in that part every day of

sixty years. What you call being born again with a vengeance, eh? Skindles was very sweet upon Tobermory in Mull; he thinks of coming back there some day. Great place for bankrupts; you can do the trick in six weeks, I'm told, from there,—recommend it to your notice;" and so the letter rattled on to the end, with a casual mention of the fact that Murray was staying in the same house with him, with the girl he kidnapped from Charlie Villars. In Tom's opinion, Murray would not be sole possessor for very long, and he made other remarks upon his wife, which are much too interesting to be repeated.

"I only hope she may cut him!" Harry soliloquised, as he finished the letter. "Charlie's about right; he's well out of it."

And then he re-read a letter from his friend, which had been lying in London for some days. Coming home, it said, in recovered spirits, too; supposed Harry was just about starting for Scotland.

"No more Scotland for me, Charlie, just yet," said Harry to the letter; and his

thoughts wandered off to their reading party a couple of years before, and again they were strolling together through mountain glens or by the banks of rocky rivers, or dreaming away the summer weather upon some loch, with the water gently rippling with a sleepy sound beneath the boat. Two years had made a difference in them both. Both had felt that life was not all sunshine and light boyish spirits and enjoyment; and Harry felt a strange momentary longing pang, as he glanced back at the happy years which had passed away for ever, and thought that the same delightful, careless zest of pleasure which came floating back to him, like a dim enchanting dream, was never more for him. He had passed on, and others had succeeded—like him, perhaps, to awake to the stern realities of trouble, care, and life. Perhaps he took an unnecessarily melancholy view of his age—was premature in his regret for the decay of youth, and youth's enjoyment. Perhaps he was—but I don't know—we do at times have fits of melancholy beyond our years; and

worry and anxiety age the mind with rapid strides.

Villars finished up by saying, that he expected to be in England by the middle of October, and Harry must come down and see him at Mottistone.

Go down to Mottistone! Ah! that would be pleasant—pleasant, but wrong. Would it be wise to lay himself open to all that self-control? However, there seemed to be no objection to his getting up now, and going to his dressing-case, unlocking it, and drawing from its inner depths a photograph—and therefore he did so.

It was a photograph of which he had possessed himself during some previous visit, and the clear air of Nice had not done violence to any one of the features of the original. Memory filled in the hues of colour and play of countenance; and, even without these additions, it was a beautiful face and a graceful figure. If you knew the face, you might not, perhaps, wonder at his sitting looking at it for so many consecutive minutes with such absorbing interest.

But you don't know it ; and, as it isn't very kind to watch a man doing silly things, which he thinks are not perceived by any but himself, we may leave him alone to enjoy all the satisfaction which he may derive from looking so fixedly at that bit of shadowy card.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Ireland is always so glad to see her English friends after the London season is over, and when she makes herself so pleasant, and dispenses with formality and ceremony in such a natural way—it seems little less than churlish not to take advantage of her hospitality. But everybody has some excellent excuse for not dispossessing their minds of the absurd notions they have formed about the country. That dreadful sea!—and yet they can brave the disagreeables of the Channel to wear themselves out with protracted gaiety at foreign watering-places;—or the Fenians! or something equally chimerical and ridiculous. It is always a great satisfaction to a generous mind to confess itself in the wrong; and you might have this satisfaction amongst

your friends on your return. You could tell them how you had always thought it to be a wild, savage place, where the hedgerows bristled with murderous weapons, and where every tree could tell a tale of homicide—where you were to be shot at continually by scowling, low-browed ruffians, whose faces were a concentration of every hideous passion; and lo and behold! it had turned out to be a green, smiling country, with the most good-humoured, amusing natives, and charming, hospitable people, who made you welcome wherever you went—who took you to see the most beautiful scenery, and made you feel as much at home as if you were in your own house. You couldn't have believed it.

Harry Egerton had already cleared his mind of many of the erroneous impressions which he had brought with him, and he was now about to do further violence to his prejudices by going through a course of country-houses. Various people had told him at various times that he was to let them know if he ever came

over; and, having nothing to take him back to England, he had accordingly done so, and is on the eve of his departure from Castle Greville.

It is a soft, clear autumn night; the rest of the party had dispersed, and Spencer and Harry are enjoying their cigars after dinner in the open air. The yellow harvest moon shone brightly down upon the landscape, the mountains stood boldly outlined in the mellow light, and "silence heard well pleased" the sounds of mirth and laughter borne upon the light air from the distant village, where some few still lingered from their early beds to mingle their jokes with the bright sparks which flew from the open forge.

Neither of the two has spoken for some minutes. Greville's thoughts were doubtless full of some benevolent intent for the good of his country and his people. Harry is watching the curling wreaths of smoke slowly ascending, expanding, fading, vanishing into space, as he sits crossways upon his chair, his arms resting on the top, and his

thoughts,—where should they be at such a time, and under such a moon?

“What are you going to do with yourself all the winter?” Greville asked at length.

Harry, reluctantly breaking from his trance, says that he hasn’t a notion,—of course he shall not go to Leicestershire as usual—and supposes that London will be his head quarters.

Greville promises woodcock shooting if he likes to come over, and stay as long as he pleases.

“Thanks, very much,” Harry answered; “but you see, I haven’t an idea at present what I shall be doing. It is such a nuisance having no sort of occupation. One feels such a useless beggar, mooning about in this way, doing nothing.”

“That’s true enough,” replies Greville. “But your father can’t mean to keep you idle all your life?”

“I don’t know, I’m sure. It looks like it. A couple of hundred a-year would go a very short way towards a profession; not to

mention the necessity of paying bills sometimes."

Harry had not gone into his affairs with his cousin. He had merely given him a general view of his position, not caring to have more confidants than necessary on money matters. Perhaps, therefore, Greville didn't know that he was really hard up. Perhaps, if he had, he might have offered to lend him money; but I doubt it. He knew that Egerton had been rather extravagant, and had lived beyond his allowance; and he thought that his father was justified in being angry,—though perhaps it was rather a strong measure to turn him out of the house as he had done; and jumping to what most people consider a natural conclusion upon this point, he supposed that Harry was still living as expensively as ever—that he had no power of self-restraint, and not much principle to speak of, and, therefore, that money lent to him would, according to precedent in such cases, be money thrown away. Accordingly he made no suggestion of the kind, and

thereby saved himself the pain of being refused ; for having no ostensible means of repaying money so lent, Harry would never have thought, except under pressing necessity, of accepting an offer of the kind. Carelessness of paying is generally supposed to accompany extravagance. But it is only in the last stages of recklessness that the originally well-principled spendthrift omits to repay a loan from a friend or relation, or a debt of honour—only when necessity has blunted his principle,—when honour has been put to flight by the urgency of his creditors,—when the desire to live has become stronger than the desire to live well,—and when by small degrees he has become accustomed to the disregard of those trifles which formerly he used to set some little store by. The flesh may often be weak and impecunious, and thereby bring the willing spirit into disrepute ; for the spirit often is willing, without the means of showing it.

Harry broke the silence this time, and abruptly too.

“ Did you ever hear of there being any-

thing odd about me?" he said; "any doubt about my being myself?"

Greville looked at him as if he thought his senses were wandering, and burst out laughing.

"What on earth do you mean, my dear Harry?"

"Why, I mean that my aunt has let drop more than once mysterious hints about my not being all right somehow. I can't explain, for I don't know any more about it than you seem to. She does, though. I'm certain of that. And then I can't help thinking that that old nurse of ours knows more than she cares to tell about something connected with our family. You saw how wildly she looked at me the other day, when we met her, and she went on in just the same way to me the day before."

"But, my dear boy, that old woman's as mad as any hatter. Anything she might say wouldn't surprise me."

"But she didn't look in that way at you. It was only when she looked up and saw me that her face changed so."

“These are the strangest fancies, my dear Harry,” said Spencer; “I can’t think where you can have got them from. As to my mother, I never remember hearing her hint at any mystery in connection with you, or any other member of the family.”

“She said, unintentionally I think, that my father had forbidden her to mention the subject; so that it was only in a fit of absence that she let it come out. Then, again, Father Murphy—I found him looking at me in a very odd way the other night; and you remember that man saying that his reverence was supposed to know more about old Biddy than other people. Well, when I began to talk to him about my father, after dinner, he shut up at once, and he had been as lively as possible before. There’s something in it, depend upon it. I don’t pretend to say what, though.”

“Well, I’m sure I can’t help you, Harry,” said Greville. “You’ve piled up a little case; but, I must confess, I don’t see that there’s anything to be made out of it. I’ll try if there’s anything to be got out of

Biddy, if you like. It's a pity you're going away to-morrow; we might have had another interview. The priest, of course, would say nothing, even if he knew anything that ought to be told. His confessional oath is sacred."

Harry was rather annoyed at having cold water thrown upon the interesting little complication which he had made out for himself. Where it would tend, if there should be anything to unravel, he was perfectly at a loss to conjecture, and he was obliged for the present to content himself with Greville's assurance that he would interest himself to find out whether there really was anything in it all, or whether his mystery was merely the fabrication of a too ingenious fancy.

Early next morning, then, he started on his journey, Greville laughingly promising that he should hear from him touching his embryo romance,—the children full of distress at his going, and extracting all sorts of promises from him to come back and see them again "soon, Cousin Harry—very

soon." They kissed their hands to him till he was out of sight, and then returned, disconsolately, with their father indoors.

Harry, meanwhile, received a curtsey and a "God send you safe, Master Henry!" from the woman at the lodge; and the same, or varieties of the same pious wish, were despatched after him, at intervals, as his car rattled him along on the first stage of his journey. Many miles of posting, with loquacious, lively drivers, who never stopped laughing, or talking, or whistling to their horses, or uttering the most curious combination of labial incitements to speed which you could suppose any horse of average intellect could take delight in. And so, eventually, he arrived at a railway station and civilisation, and said good-bye to the rugged mountains and rivers of the west.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE weeks passed quickly away in pleasant country-houses, amongst pleasant, hospitable people, and time stole on into October almost unawares. Travelling expenses, too, were eating into our young friend's now scanty allowance; and when at last he began to think of returning to London, he found that he should only just about do it on his remaining funds.

Accordingly, after devoting a day to the apple-women of Dublin, and one or two friends who were quartered there, he committed himself again to the sea, and arrived next morning in dirty, muddy London.

Dreary, and dark, and cold St. James's Place looked as he drove up to his old quarters in a decrepit "growler" from Euston Square, tired and dishevelled with a night's

travelling, and out of spirits at the prospect of an indefinite stay in the gloom and smoke of October and November London. How deserted the whole place looked! How comfortless, bare, and uninhabited that bedroom! Dressing-table with nothing on it but the looking-glass; fire not even lighted, though it was a cold and shivery morning; the genial blacks, too, thickly seen on chimney-piece and table, foretaste of the winter's smoke; the housemaid coming out of his room as he entered, dirty and unclean, fresh from the fenders and the grates; the man-servant without a collar,—his rusty clothes, his three-day shirt,—all gave him a shudder of discomfortable horror as he listlessly watched the unstrapping of his portmanteau. Desiring to be called at one o'clock, he turned into bed, and for a time forgot the situation in accommodating sleep.

An inch-broad line of sun was stretching itself on the wall as he awoke, some hours after, to the sound of the man's knock; and even this thin allowance of sunlight, which had made its way through some stack of

chimneys opposite, had a cheering effect on the awakening sense.

The prospect required a little light to set off its shade. For now that he was in London, Harry didn't in the least know what he was going to do. In the first place, he had no money—allowance not due for another fortnight—must eat—food not provided gratis in London—should have to borrow from his landlady—rather *infra dig.*, but a positive necessity—might borrow money from some friend, perhaps. But he had not yet got accustomed to the notion of coming out as an actual pauper; this was too much for his pride at present. However, as thinking about it seemed to mend matters very little, he jumped out of bed, dressed, and started off to his club, in the hope of meeting somebody there. And, better—he found, to his delight, among other letters, one enclosing a cheque for an old bet, which he had long since despaired of ever receiving. There were no bills, which was a cheerful surprise. The autumn is a dull time for duns. They are generally sunning them-

selves on Margate sands, or in other haunts of the tradesman world, stretching their necks from the top of Swiss mountains, or airing their guide-books down the Caledonian Canal, or through the Trossachs of Scotland—dispensing among coach-drivers, or boatmen, or at *table-d'hôtes*, the money which they have been able to screw out of reluctant customers. They have no thought, therefore, of business at these times, and relax for a season the bow which at other times is ever stretched to shoot forth bills against the unlucky impecunious wretch. The latter, accordingly, enjoys for a time a certain impunity, and begins to fancy himself in easy circumstances, unless he happens to sit down next his tailor on board a steam-boat, or jostle up against his bootmaker on a crowded platform.

Egerton, too, had taken the precaution of writing consolatory epistles to the most attentive of his duns, from the west of Ireland. So that even stay-at-home-for-want-of-funds creditors had considered that sending threatening letters to Ireland would be

as useless as sending coals to Newcastle. They would, of course, be treated with the contempt of security, and the object of them, according to the custom of the country, indulge in rippling laughter as he quietly folded them to light his pipe.

Among other letters, Harry found one from Villars, touched, apparently, by his having come over purposely to meet him—the writer to be in London on the following evening.

“Beat him by a neck,” soliloquised Egerton, as he cracked another egg, and looked forward to the near prospect of seeing his friend again—her brother, too.

Having finished his breakfast-lunch, and looked over the papers, he strolled out towards Eaton Place, to know if his father had been in town.

Notwithstanding the deserted appearance of the streets, the sun made Piccadilly look cheerful enough, and his spirits were some way above zero, and rising rapidly, when he suddenly stumbled upon Castleton, who was now a promising cornet in a distinguished regiment of cavalry.

“Why, d——n it all, if here isn’t Harry Egerton!” he exclaimed, as they shook hands. “What are you doing in this —— place?—passing through?”

“Not a bit of it. I’ve just come back from Ireland,—probably be here all the winter.”

“Well, by ——, I wish you joy of it!” returned Castleton, who had formed his language upon the most approved regimental model. “Which way are you going?”

Egerton wasn’t particular, and turned back with him towards Bond Street. Castleton informed him that he had been in town since the end of the season—hardly been away for a day, by ——.

“Not a soul in town—and the heat in August, why, you might have roasted your grandmother upon the pavement. *I* never was in such a —— place.”

“You take second leave, I suppose,” said Harry, laughing at his pious reference to his elderly relation.

“You may be —— well sure that you’ll not catch me in the —— place after the 1st

of December." Castleton further added that his horses were at Slough until then, and only that it was so —— hard to get away, there was some hunting to be had from London. "But why are you not in Leicestershire?"

Egerton had had a little difference with his father, and asked if people were not coming back to town.

"Not a —— soul," was the reply. "Are you going down to Newmarket next week?"

Newmarket! There was a pleasant sound about that word. Having given up his interest of late in sporting matters, it had not occurred to Harry that the Cambridge-shire week was just coming on. But it did occur to him now that it might be a good opportunity for making a little money; and money was very much wanted.

"I forgot all about it," he answered. "I think I probably shall. What did you do on the Leger?"

"Won a trifle," Castleton said. Going to races was about the only thing there was to do for the last two months; and he pro-

ceeded to regret that even all his fair acquaintances were out of town,—gone to Baden, or other resorts of gaiety and gay dresses,—and by this time they had arrived at Douglas's. Hair cut and shampooed, and the various seductive lotions and tinctures declined, their walk was continued towards Belgravia, and they separated at Hyde Park Corner, after a contemplation of the deserted appearance of the Park. When last Egerton had looked in at this time of day, it had been thronged with a double and treble row of carriages, containing upright young ladies and savage-looking dowagers, who had come to air their charms before well-filled rows of chairs, and moustachioed young men of cotillons, or captains of the guard. Now there was not a horse in the Row,—one old man, and a very dirty old man, resting upon a chair which appeared to have lost its way, and a one-horse brougham, which, in every point, —horse, driver, vehicle, occupant,—had seen its best days, and was rolling rapidly down the slopes of time much faster than the horse cared to

go. No,—there was one other object in sight. Under the leafless shade of the trees there wandered a disconsolate dancing-man. A vacant melancholy sat upon his expressive countenance. He was lamenting over the transient nature of London seasons, counting the days which must elapse before the next one ^{*}began, dwelling with a natural pride upon his appearance at that breakfast, recalling with tender rapture the soft look which he had given with such effect at that ball, or the impression his fund of gossip had made upon her Grace. That cotillon ! How many little bows he had been presented with ! how popular he had been that evening ! Ah ! it was a delicious retrospect,—why couldn't the season last for ever ?

And the customary simper stole over his face as he thought, and he was again in fancy pouring out his small stream of self-satisfied twaddle into the delighted ear of some female fac-simile of himself.

In the distance, Egerton saw him coming, recognised the form, and fled.

His brother's servant opened the door of

his father's house, and informed him that Mr. Egerton had already gone down into Leicestershire, but that Mr. Philip was still in town, doing duty with his regiment.

He was not at home just then. Rather fortunate, Harry thought, as it gave him an opportunity of doing the civil without any disagreeable accompaniment. So he told the servant to say that he had called, and then Philip might come and see him or not as he liked.

Having promised Castleton to dine with him at his barracks, half-past seven found him at the gate ; and as he was acquainted with most of the unmarried officers, he spent a sufficiently pleasant evening. Rivers also he found there, who gave him a full, true, and particular account of their yachting adventures since he parted company with them.

Then his renewed interest in sporting matters received a considerable stimulus from the conversation around him, which was almost exclusively on racing topics. No, that isn't true ; for there were many

good stories flying about,—good, from their strong flavour,—which provoked appreciating laughter from the young cornets whose intellects were just up to this mark. And the female celebrities of the town made a pleasant variety to the discussion of equine pedigree and handicap prospects.

Their intimate familiarity with these two subjects of conversation made it not unnatural, perhaps, that some of the young men in question should consider themselves *the* young men of London *par excellence*. No one would grudge them the proud position; but it may not always be necessary that they should air their consciousness of superiority so arrogantly over other poor devils, who can't pretend to the same intellectual eminence. It is very gratifying, however, to see how thoroughly chaperones, and dowagers, and young ladies support their pretensions. They are quite willing to overlook the fact of their being mostly eldest sons, in consideration of the mental qualities which they so agreeably display. And being generally active and energetic dancers, these

superior persons have many opportunities of showing off to advantage their powers of making themselves agreeable. They are, therefore, generally and deservedly popular. So that merit, you see, however hampered by the disadvantages of rank or wealth, is sometimes appreciated, whatever cynical people may say to the contrary. The ordinary reader may, perhaps, be startled at hearing that there is so much that is interesting and attractive in a class of individuals to whom a poor, unappreciating world is accustomed to apply the rather contemptuous *sobriquet* of "plungers;" in which case it is very evident that the ordinary reader has never had the happiness to arrive at that vein of lively wit and intelligence which lies hid beneath the stolid and immovable manner of the cavalry officer. You have not been fortunate enough to be admitted to a private view of the stores of knowledge and information which he has laid by during those hours which he gives up daily to the education and improvement of his mind. There may, indeed, be some among them who are not so

well stocked, who can only talk intelligently upon the topics of the day, and enter into general conversation with graceful ease. Heaven forbid that there should be many who would so disgrace their cloth ! You, my dear captain of hussars, or cornet of dragoons, who are unequal to the exertion of dancing, you would never consent to be ranked among the contemptible few who positively think, poor creatures ! that they have a soul above a stable and a race-course. No, no. You have some notions of duty ; your moustaches were not given to you not to be waxed and curled ; and therefore you will continue to direct your advantages to their proper point, in spite of what a cavilling world may say. *Macte virtute*. There will always be young ladies with capacities equal to the admiration of your ornamental merits ; and the sneers of ill-natured people, who never will acknowledge anything great or noble in their fellows, need not deprive you of the satisfaction of feeling that you have not lived in vain.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CROWD of thoughts come rushing back upon Villars' mind as the Folkestone train draws up to the Victoria platform. Full of delicious hopes and dreams he had left it some fifteen months before ; he was returning to it (he told himself now) the victim of despair. Quite a delusion on his part. It is only in stories of very romantic sentiment that the poor unfortunate, who has not been so successful as he could have wished in his early love arrangements, refuses to be happy again.

Constant change had almost obliterated all traces of the sad disappointment which was to have made him miserable for ever ; and it was only as he neared again the familiar scenes, which memory peopled with a host of sunny passages, that Master

Charlie began to think himself an object for the world's compassion.

But the habitual bright look returned to his face again, as bright and happy as you please, when he caught sight of Harry Egerton awaiting his return, faithful and true, where he had parted from him months before. It was something to have a friend to whose affection absence and separation made no difference. It was something, he thought, in his present mood, to find one constant quantity in the sum of human nature.

They met—'twas in a crowd—and in a crowd of returned tourists, too, amongst whom Charlie's sunburnt face and broadened shoulders appeared to some advantage. So, at least, Egerton thought. I don't fancy he liked the tourist much. Not from a supercilious contempt for his inferiors, or that he grudged them their enjoyment ; but the manners, and behaviour, and appearance of the Englishman when he tours jar upon any nerves which pretend to a sense of refinement. Old clothes, too, are not becom-

ing; and there is an appearance of dirty vulgarity about a crowd of English tourists, which even "the best people," when they tour, must have great confidence in themselves to feel entirely free from.

Villars was to stay in town that night—would of course put up with Harry—would equally of course dine with him.

Servant and luggage, therefore, to St. James's Place: they to the St. James's Club.

There was so much to hear and so much to be told on both sides that dinner seemed to have flown down their throats, and they are already in the smoking-room. There, after a pause, Harry delicately approaches the subject of his friend's little misfortune, venting all his abuse upon the gay deceiver who had stolen his love away. After all, he thought that Charlie, having got over it, was better off as he was. It would have been a bore to be married so young,—too early to settle down into a life of humdrum respectability. For his part, he didn't intend to marry till he was five-and-thirty (a fine branch of peculiarly acid fruit dangled before

the impostor's eye as he spoke), and even then, by the way, he didn't see what he should have to marry upon. So they agreed that altogether the whole business was a matter for congratulation rather than otherwise, and Charlie changed the subject with a sigh.

Egerton's own prospects were then discussed. He had better come down to Mottistone, Villars said. They would all be charmed to see him.

Harry replied that he should like it above all things ; but—— and he hesitated, and the other looked at him.

“ But what ? There's no reason why you shouldn't, old boy. It's much better than staying in London.”

Harry again said that he should like nothing better, and the prospect seemed so delightful that he puffed away vigorously at his cigar, and didn't say that he would go.

Villars thought he hesitated, perhaps, because he didn't like to appear to be making use of him, and so he reiterated his assurance of the pleasure which the whole

household would feel at his presence, for as long as ever he liked to stay. And then he went on, as if prompted by some passing thought, "You didn't see much of my people in London this year, did you? My sister hardly ever mentioned your name latterly."

"No, not very much," Harry replied, with slightly heightened colour. "I didn't go out very much last season. I'm beginning to get rather tired of balls."

This was not by any means the case, for he had gone out a great deal, and was not at all tired of balls yet; but he was obliged to say something, and fiction was better than nothing.

"So young, and yet so *blasé*!" Charlie rejoined. "But about your coming down to us?" he continued, coming directly to the point. "Why not come at once? You have nothing to do here."

"I couldn't just now,—thanks, old boy," answered Harry, slowly; "because,"—a happy thought occurred to him that he had half promised to go to Newmarket the following week; and the present crisis now

determined him to try his luck on the turf again,—“because I promised to go to Newmarket with Castleton and some other fellows next week.”

Oh! was Castleton in town? Villars asked. What was he doing? “But you’d much better not go and begin betting again. You’ll only lose more money.”

“But then there’s the chance of winning; and I shall only bet in very small amounts, if I do at all.”

“You’ll be safe enough to bet, if you go.”

Egerton, however, stuck to his determination, and promised to go down to Motistone some other time, trusting to something else turning up which might give him an excuse for resisting temptation. It was almost worth resisting to experience the elevated sense of self-satisfaction which so great an exhibition of moral courage and self-denial produced in his mind. He thought himself quite a superior creature in having been able to prefer the excitement of the turf to the delicious but dangerous society of a hopeless attachment.

Recollections of former Cambridgeshire meetings were naturally suggested by considerations of Newmarket; and once more, in fancy, they were racing their hacks along the smooth turf of the Beacon course, through the gathering twilight of October days. Every post was remembered, every turn, every field. What days those were!—could they but come again! The night was far too short for all they had to say about the dear old place, the acquaintances who were scattered, the adventures they had shared, the good fellowship they had enjoyed, the friendships they had formed.

“Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a boy?”

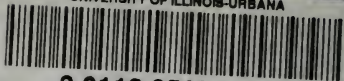
New friends and new interests may have replaced the old; present ties may be as engrossing and attractive as the former were—present life as full of pleasure, and as devoid of care. But there is a poetry about the past, about the days of our schoolboy or college life,—a lingering charm which the mists of time never can obscure,—which attracts us ever back to

the green memories of those early years ; which causes old men to look with such eager longing down the dim vista of age, to recall the trivial interests which cluster round each well-remembered spot, or to trace the first germs of that dear friendship which sheds so soft a light upon the fading prospect.

True it is that early friendships die and pass away ; but will memory not preserve the seeds of these withered flowers, so bright while they bloomed, and treasure them up to germinate afresh in later years, when the pleasures of the world and life shall have been exhausted,—when the weary man is looking back with a yearning regret to those fresh feelings of youth which he never more shall know, and which the friends of his boyhood will have such power to recall ? Let us live, and hope.

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